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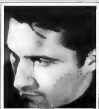
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Van the man
in memoriam.

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the wire

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• **RADICAL POP-STAR** Billy Bragg sets out on a 15-date UK tour this month. He plays London Town & Country (12, 13 October), Nottingham Rock City (15), Manchester Academy (17), Glasgow Barrowlands (18), Aberdeen Beech Ballroom (19), Edinburgh Queens Hall (20), Newcastle Mayfair (22), Leeds University (23), Liverpool Royal Court (25), Swansea Penryhol Centre (26), Bristol Studio (27), Exeter University (28), Birmingham Hummingbird (30), Cambridge Corn Exchange (31).

• **SAXOPHONIST** Elton Dean and bassist Marcio Mattos have set up a new jazz club in London's Stoke Newington area. The club, *Jazz Rumours*, is at the Rumours pub, 121 Stoke Newington Rd N16, and will run on Friday evenings. First gigs are by the Paul Rutherford Qt (18 October); the Lal Coxhill Trio (25), Jim Dvorski Qt (1 November); Elton Dean Trio (8), the (15, 22), Marcio Mattos/Steve Noble/Alex Maguire (29). Concerts begin at 8.30pm and prices are £4 (£3 concessions).



Joanna MacGregor dreams up the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. Photo by Howard Scoley

HUDDERSFIELD GOES BRIT!

SIR MICHAEL Tippett and Sir Harrison Birtwistle head the list of over 60 British composers who are featured in this year's Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, which runs from 21 November to 1 December. Birtwistle is represented by early works *Silbury Air* and *Morán* and by the UK premiere of *Gauvain's Journey*, the orchestral suite taken from his latest opera, Tippett by his 1944 oratorio *A Child Of Our Time* and only the second UK performance of his cantata *Byzantium*, for soprano and orchestra. Other highlights include operas by Robert Saxton (*Caritas*) and John Casken (*Golem*) and new pieces by James MacMillan, Michael Finnissy, Simon Bainbridge, Howard Skempton and others. Artists appearing at the festival will include Joanna MacGregor, Emma Johnson, Heinrich Schiff, James Claperton, and the Balanescu and Kronos string quartets. Punters are also invited to "unwind" at a late-night improvisation session with Derek Bailey, Thee Liperi and Louis Moholo. Details from 0484 422288 ext 2103.

• **GERRY MULLIGAN**, John Surman, Karin Krog and Oliver Jones are among the artists due to appear at this year's Guinness Jazz Festival, in Cork, Ireland, which runs from 25-28 October. Other acts likely to appear include

Teddy Edwards, Ken Peplowski, Red Mitchell, Tommy Chase and Johnny Mars. Most artists will be appearing on most days, but the Gerry Mulligan Qt are playing only on 27. Details from Dublin 765091.

• **THE SECOND** part of the Mozart 200 festival runs at London's Barbican Centre from 28 September to 5 December. As well as various lectures, exhibitions and films, the festival features music from the later part of Mozart's life. Artists appearing include the ECO with their Principal Conductor Jeffrey Tate and guest conductors Sir Colin Davis and Sir Charles Mackerras, the Chacacs Qt and soloists Mitsuho Uchida, Radu Lupu, Thea King, Anders Schiff and Pinchas Zukerman. Works scheduled include *Symphony No 35* (28 September), *Mass In C Minor* (2 October), *Piano Concertos No's 17, 19* (9); *Piano Concerto No 21* (19), *Symphony No 36* (27), *Piano Concerto No 25*, *Symphony No 38* (30), *String Quartets K515, K516* (5 November), *Symphonias No's 40, 41* (13), *String Quartets K589, K590* (30), *Clarinet Concerto*, *Requiem* (5 December). Details from 071 638 4141.

• **DAVE BRUBECK**, Billy Bragg, Bobby Watson and Icebreaker are among the artists playing at this year's Aberdeen Alternative Festival, which runs from 10-20 October. Other acts due to appear include Ivo Pappasov, The Cramps, Gault Blast Orchestra, Steel Pulse, the Average White Band, Gordon Giltrap and Martin Taylor. Details from 0224 655822.

• **HAN BENNIK**, Paul Bley, Anthony Braxton, Steve Lacy, Evan Parker and Horace Tapscott are among the artists who have been invited to appear at *October Meeting 1991*, a nine-day festival of contemporary jazz and impro-

vised music which will run at Amsterdam's BIM-huis and venues in 12 other Dutch cities from 18–26 October. The festival, which includes over 30 concerts and a symposium, is organised by the Dutch Jazz federation and follows the success of its last October Meeting in 1987. Other likely participants this year include Steve Beresford, Marilyn Crispell, Claude Deppa, Trilok Gurtu, Tristan Honsinger, George Lewis, Misha Mengelberg, Herb Robertson, Richard Teitelbaum and many more. Details from 31 20 623 3373.

• **ALTOIST** **BOBBY** Watson and drummer Vic Lewis co-lead their group **Horizon** on a brief UK tour this month. Catch them at Leeds Irish Centre (9 October), Glasgow Strathclyde Suite (10); Aberdeen Art Centre (11); St Andrews Younger Hall (12); Edinburgh Queens Hall (13); London Ronnie Scott's (14–19); Cambridge Corn Exchange (20).

• **RADIO THREE'S** jazz coverage this month reflects the current interest in all things **Japanese**. A four-part series, *Jazz Japan Style*, presented by Sunchi Satoh, begins on Friday 11 October (6.30pm), repeated on following Thursdays at 11pm. Meanwhile, the Keith Jarrett concert, originally scheduled for September, will now be broadcast on 7 October at 10pm. Other upcoming live concerts include two sets from this year's Glasgow Jazz Festival, the Wayne Shorter/Herbie Hancock group (14) and the Michel Petruccianni Qt (4 November), both at 10pm.



Looks like Geri Allen, on a CMN tour next month with Charlie Haden and Paul Motian. Photo by Jean-Marc Bureau

MOTIAN IN MOTION

THE GERI Allen/Charlie Haden/Paul Motian Trio, Monty Alexander's Ivory & Steel octet and John Casken's chamber opera *Galen* will be undertaking CMN/Rolling Rock tours in the next two months. First out is *Galen*, which plays at Newcastle Playhouse (17, 18 October), Durham Dancin' House (19); Leicester Phoenix Arts Centre (22); London QEH (24); Sheffield Ponds Forge Complex (26); Manchester RNCM (26 November), Huddersfield St Paul's Hall (27); Coventry Warwick University Arts Centre (29, 30).

Monty Alexander's Ivory & Steel octet, featuring trumpeter Harry Beckett, will visit Becknell Wilde Theatre (6 November); Bath University Hall (8); Birmingham Adrian Boult Hall (9); Bradford Alhambra Studio (10); Sheffield Leadmill (12); Manchester RNCM (13); Cheltenham Town Hall (14); Darrington Great Hall (15).

Finally, the Allen/Haden/Motian threesome, plus the Louis Slavis Qt, set out to London QEH (21 November); Southampton University (22); Brighton Gardner Centre (23); Cheltenham Town Hall (24); Becknell Wilde Theatre (25); Sheffield Leadmill (26); Manchester RNCM (27); Leeds Irish Centre (28); Birmingham Adrian Boult Hall (29).

• **NEW MUSIC** group **Lontano** launch their new concert-series *Fusionplus* this month. Featuring 20 20th century pieces from around the

world, the five-concert series includes works by composers such as Steve Reich, Kevin Volans, Alejandro Vinasó and Erollyn Wallen plus special

commissions from Lindsay Cooper and Martin Butler. The last two concerts of the series take place in February 1992, but *Fusionplus* begins this month with concerts at London's ICA on 6, 13 and 20 October. Details from 071 930 3647.

• **HARPSICHOIDIST** Trevor Pannock takes his leading period-instrument group **The English Concert** on a UK tour in October/November. With a programme that includes pieces by Bach, Corelli, Handel, Telemann and Vivaldi, the English Concert will visit Huddersfield Town Hall (18 October); Edinburgh Greyfriars (19); Stralung University (20); Glasgow International Concert Hall (21); Liverpool Philharmonic Hall (23); Lancaster University (24); Buxton Opera House (25); London St John's Smith Square (30); Southampton University (31); Oxford Sheldonian (2 November).

• **US TRUMPETER** Wynnton Marsalis brings his band over for three UK concerts this month. He plays Glasgow Royal Concert Hall (15 October), Birmingham Symphony Hall (16), London Royal Festival Hall (19).

• **MALI'S SINGING** superstar **Salif Keita** tours the UK this month, with dates at Leeds Irish Centre (11 October), Norwich UEA (12), Cambridge Corn Exchange (13), Newcastle Riverside Club (14); Aberdeen Music Hall (15); Glasgow University (16); Manchester International (17); London Town & Country (18),

• now's the time

Bristol Studio (19); Oxford Playhouse (20).

• **THE TAKEMITSU Signature**, a weekend festival of music by Toru Takemitsu, takes place at London's Barbican Centre from 10-13 October as part of this autumn's nationwide Japan Festival. Those appearing include the composer himself, guitarist Julian Bream, pianists Paul Crossley, Peter Donohoe and Peter Serkin, and the LSO with its conductor Michael Tilson Thomas who present the world premiere of a specially-commissioned Takemitsu piece *Quotation Of Dream - Say Saa, Take Me* (13). For a free leaflet, ring 071 638 4141, ext 218.

• **EVAN PARKER**, Lol Coxhill, John Stevens and Louis Moholo are among the artists appearing at a new season of improvisation concerts at London Islington's Angel & Crown, organised by trumpeter Roland Ramanan. Following the success of the initial series of concerts over the summer, further dates have been added: these are Conspiracy, Lol Coxhill (10 October), Louis Moholo, Paul Rogers, Evan Parker (17), John Stevens's SME (24), Marcio Mattos Qr (31); Full Monty (7 November), Paul Bayliss Trio, Lol Coxhill (14), Mark Sanders, Pat Thomas, Steve Beresford (21); Maggie Nicols Qr (28). Details from 071 274 1541.

• **CHANNEL FOUR** have finally scheduled Leo Feigin's ten-part series on *Raviate New Music* for transmission this winter. The series, to be

shown on Tuesday evenings at 00.15, begins on 19 November with a film about pianist Sergey Kuryokhin called *The Divine Madness*. There are plans for Kuryokhin to play several concerts in the UK in November, and Jazz Group Arkangelisk, who are also featured in the series, will definitely be touring the UK from 19-27 November. *Raviate New Music* will run until 4 February 1992 (with a two-week break over Xmas and New Year).

• **LONDON'S FORWARD Music** is promoting four very different concerts in October. On 15, John Tilbury, Geraint Davies and Ian Mitchell are the performers at a Cornelius Cardew Memorial Evening (BMIC, admission free), on 18, pianist Eric Parkin's recital includes pieces by Aaron Copland and John White (City University); on 22, the Paragon Ensemble play a selection of new works by various English and Scottish composers (Blackheath Concert Halls); and on 26, Lol Coxhill, Evan Parker and Eddie Prevost will be improvising at the Jazz Cafe. Details from Forward Music, 081 541 0976.

• **COMPOSER JEREMY Peyton Jones** has reformed his ensemble **Regular Music**, which now includes ex-Loose Tubes members Steve Buckley, John Escott and Ashley Slater. The new 11-piece group also features original member Charles Hayward (of This Heat) and Loneano singer Sara Stoen and play their first gigs this month at London's Cabot Hall (21 October) and ICA Theatre (27, 28).

• **CAMBRIDGE MODERN Jazz Club** has moved from its previous base at Flambards Wine Bar and will now host its regular Friday night jazz concerts at **The Junction**, Cambridge's new arts and entertainments venue. Coming up in October will be Coup D'Etat (4), Sean Tracey Qr (18); Bobby Wellans Qr (25). Details from 0223 410356 (Junction) or 0223 62550 (Jazz Club).

• **TWO MORE** sad losses for the jazz community were registered with the passing of Charlie Barnet, saxophonist and bandleader, and Peter Clayton, broadcaster.

Charlie Barnet was one of the last survivors among those bandleaders who swung the swing era. He led a somewhat amazing life - born into a very wealthy family, he was married 11 times - and his various orchestras bloomed through the 1930s and 40s. Although his sidemen included Roy Eldridge, Benny Carter, George Auld, and Frankie Newton, and he scored major hits with tunes such as "Cherokee" and the perennial "Skyliner", Barnet's recordings have been somewhat neglected by reissues. His own sax playing - on soprano, alto and tenor - was by no means irrelevant to the band's music, with his abiding love for Johnny Hodges' style reflected in his alto especially.

Peter Clayton's death was not as sudden as the passing of Charles Fox earlier this year, since he had been ailing for some time. But Peter's friendly, solicitous voice was a seamless part of jazz broadcasting for some 30 years, and his undying enthusiasm for the music and admiration for its performers was an integral part

of *Sounds Of Jazz* and *Jazz Record Requests* and the many other slots he handled for the BBC. A great professional and a charming, easy-going man, he will be missed.

As we go to press, we also learn of the death of organist Richard 'Groove' Holmes at the age of 60.

in town tonight

October's selected jazz gigs

* indicates other gigs at the venue are listed elsewhere on pp 4-6

Bath Foraw (0225 826777); **Mike Gibbs Band** (10) **Birmingham Bearwood** (021 420 2563); **Mundell Lowe** (7); **Ken Peplowski** (21); **Midlands Arts Centre** (021 440 3838); **Sean Tracey Qnt** (6); **Alex Maguire/Steve Noble** (20); **Strathallen** (01 071 328 8349); **Theo Travis Band** (20); **Symphony Hall** (021 212 3333)*; **Mike Gibbs Band** (18); **Dave Brubeck Qr** (25).

Bracknell South Hall Park (0344 427272); **Chris Buscoe** (8); **Bristol The Albert** (0272 661968); **Charlie Hazmahaw Qr** (20); **Belop Club** (01 071 328 8349); **Theo Travis Band** (11); **Old Vn** (01 071 437 4967); **Andy Sheppard's In-Cos-Motion** (6); **Thokla** (0272 293301); **Jason Rebello** (5).

Cardiff Four Bars Inn (0222 374962); **Theo Travis Band** (26); **Coventry Biggin Hall** (0203 465133); **Alexander McCabe Qr** (15); **University Arts Centre** (0203 465133)*; **Bobby Wellans Qr** (7); **Crawley Hawth Centre** (0293 552941); **Chris Buscoe Qr** (4).

Durham Dingles House (091 384 3720)*; **Mike Gibbs Band** (12); **Hemel Hempstead Blue**

Note Club (0442 242827): Peter Fairclough Group (10) **Leeds Irish Centre (do 0532 608301)*** Mike Gibbs (17); Ray Anderson (24) **Liverpool Philharmonic Hall (051 709789):** Mike Gibbs Band (15) **Manchester RNCM (061 273 4504)*** Mike Gibbs Band (11).

Newcastle Corner House (091 265 9602): Ian Carr Group (6); Oliver Jones Trio (29); *Playhouse (091 232 7079):* Mike Gibbs Band (13) **Northampton County Tavern (do 0604 718233):** Stan Robinson (6); Alan Skidmore/John Burgess (13); Don Weller (27) **Norwich UEA (0603 060352):** Mike Gibbs Band (16) **Nottingham Old Va (do 0602 419741):** Jean Toussaint (16).

Sheffield Lyceum (0742 769922): Mike Gibbs Band (20) **Southampton University (071 0703 777424):** Mike Gibbs Band (14) **St Albans Arena (0727 44488):** Andy Sheppard's In Co-Motion (18) **Swansea Fringe Festival (do 071 437 4967):** Andy Sheppard's In Co-Motion (9) **Swindon True Heart (0793 790462):** Charlie Hearnshaw Qr (20, lunchtime), Theo Travis Band (25)

Wakefield Sports Club (do 0924 374900): Esther Miller (4); Iain Ballamy (11); Carol Grimes/Ian Shaw (18); Emanon (25) **Wavendon Stables (0908 583928):** Bobby Shew Qr (11); Don Weller Qr (18); Alec Dankworth (25) **York Arts Centre (0904 627129):** Peter Fairclough Group (3)

Finally, this month's **London** highlights **Barbican EC2 (071 638 8891):** Dave Brubeck Qr (16) **Bass Clef NI (071 729 2476):** Labs Siffre (8); Masao Costantini/Ivor Goldberg Qr (13) **Club Integral**

SW2. B-Shops For The Poor (5); Big Buddha (12); Maggie Nicols (19); Kahondo Style (26) Jacksons Lane N6 (081 340 5226): Peter Fairclough Group (26).

Jazz Cafe NW1 (071 284 4358)* Ivo Papasov (1); Barbara Thompson's Paraphernalia (2); Tony Williams Group (7-9); Walter Wolfman Washington (10-12); Steve Williamson Band (14, 15); Eddie Harris Funk Band (16, 17); Jason Rebello (18, 19); Ray Anderson (22, 23); Astrud Gilberto (25-27); Dary Dozen Brass Band (30, 31) **Location Cafe E1 (071 265 9775):** Danella Clynes (1); Tim Garland (8); Liam Noble (15); Kenny Wheeler/Son Szulmann (22); Tim Whitehead Qr (29).

Pianissimo Club NI (do 071 241 4235): John Corbett Trio, Sue Ferrar (1); Embers, Sylvia Hallert (8); Dreamtime (15); John Law/Marcio Mattos/Alex Kolkowski, Jon Lloyd (22); No Rules OK, John Russell (29) **The Place Theatre W1 (do 071 387 0031):** Crosswinds Festival - Hornweb, Barry Guy/Paul Rogers (6); Chris Burn Ensemble, Evan Parker (13); Smith String Qr, Dave Fowler/Graham Clark Trio (27)

Queen Elizabeth Hall SE1 (071 928 8800)* Mike Gibbs Band (9) **Swan W6 (081 748 1043):** Forest (1); Alan Tomlinson Trio, Gary Todd (8); Anacrusis (15); Vanessa Mackness trio, Thebe Lujere (22); El Momento, Mike Walter (29) **Tenor Clef NI (071 729 2476):** Michael Gareck Trio (3); Bheko Mseleku Qr (4-5); Jesse Davis (15-19); Charlie Hearnshaw Qr (21); Benny Green Trio (24-26); Walter Norris (29-2 Nov) **World's End N4 (do 071 328 8349):** Theo Travis Band (24).

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Photo by Andrew Prohaska

SHUFFLE DEMONS: HORNS AND COSTUMES

by Ben Watson

THE SHUFFLE Demons are cartoon beatniks, the Young Ones of the saxophone, delighting audiences with their tales of inner city squalor ("Get Out Of My House, Roach!") and back-to-basics blues ("Cheese On Bread").

The band play rollicking, crowd-pleasing swing — acoustic funk — delivered with a rough-hewn sense of chaos that leans from Thelonious Monk and the Art Ensemble of Chicago. Rich Underhill's alto in particular is a scorching combination of free jazz bluster and witty Dolphy-esque bop. Arriving from the length and breadth of Canada to the "jazz capital" Toronto, Rich and the others felt disappointed with what they found. In the early 80s the free scene,

the Sun Ra and Arts Ensemble gigs, had quietened down. So basking seemed a way of making it happen.

Whereas the attempt of academic players to "reach the people" straitjackets them in jazz-rock, this basking populism lets the Demons jump into freeform cacophony at any turn. The music is blocked in with the broad strokes required of pavement artists, delivering a ragged, raw wallop that is rabidly infectious.

Rich Underhill's alto and occasional bariitone is flanked by the twin tenors of Perry White and Dave Parker. They use devices — powerhouse horn-section work suddenly exploding into paper-streamer freedom, for example — associated with (serious) sax quartets. Perry White brought with him experience of Hugh Fraser's Vancouver Ensemble for Jazz Improvisation, the notorious VEJ1. Now a mainstream success, Hugh Fraser's early aggregations were less straight-laced: "Hugh and I grew up together, played in the same

R&B bands. We formed the Jazzoids, a late-70s acid jazz band: pyramid helmets out of tin foil, long white gowns – I worked in a hospital laundry for a short spell."

Dave Parker has a line in ferocious bebop solos which interrupt the clowning with an intensity that is almost shocking. Bassist George Keller taught himself to play by jamming to the Beatles and Boots Randolph on the radio. He is a virtuoso: fascinating to witness. Demon showmanship enthrall an audience for George's out bass explorations. Drummer Stech Wynston was taught by Jim Blackie, the Scottish drum pedagogue with a background in pipe-band drumming, and frequented the Banff summer school (teachers included Kenny Wheeler, Dave Holland, Hugh Fraser and Muhai Abrams). His words – he wrote the title track, "What Do You Want" – are bonehead poetry worthy of Alexei Sayle.

People buy what they know. "Extending the audience for jazz" usually means conforming to every cliché in the book, ironing out exactly the conflicts and surprises that make the music worthwhile. By contrast, the Demons reduce the visual icons of jazz to a series of gags and play the circus for all it is worth. Cliche is transformed by converting it into something huge, neon-lit, unfamiliar. Of course the people in serious suits will feel uncomfortable. Time they did.

Discography

- Stuntish* (Stubby R001 LP/MC)
- Big Rap* (Stony Plain SP1124 LP/MC)
- What Do You Want* (Stony Plain SP1152 MC/CD)

JOEY CALDERAZZO: PIANO

by Mike Fish

JOEY CALDERAZZO is one of what seems like a score of new pianists on Blue Note.

"Yeah, but the nice thing is that we're all different. Me and Benny Green, for instance – it's like we're playing two different instruments. Or me and Geri Allen. If I was to compare myself stylistically to any of the others it would have to be to Michel Petrucciani, and even we play completely differently."

Is there a camaraderie or a rivalry between piano players?

"I was always told that people who play together in big band sections, like sax players, were very tight – they discuss reeds and mouthpieces and stuff. Piano can be tougher on that. Especially when some people do better than other people, if they have to play with singers to pay their bills. There are guys in their middle 30s who are feeling angry at what's happening now. What's being pushed is young musicians, which stinks in a way. There are so many great musicians in their mid-30s who are working, but as far as building a major career, it can't really happen for them at this point."

So here is young Joey Calderazzo, building what he hopes will be a major career. At 26, with a Blue Note debut *In The Door* under his belt and a second set scheduled for recording this autumn, he must have as good a chance as any. He's a player firmly in the tradition of the post-bop stylists – Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea will do as reference points – with an enthusiastic, songful manner that breaks through the usual high-velocity solos to a more lyrical place.

Joey got his break when Michael Brecker heard him play at a

1991-1992 contemporary

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Monty Alexander's Ivory & Steel

6-15 November

Monty Alexander, Ray Carless, Kevin Robinson, Dennis Rollins, Jami Nasser, Manjone Whyte, Russell 'Konker' Hallmeyer, Winston Clifford, Idnis Muhammad.

Monty Alexander's Ivory & Steel celebrates the musical heritage of the West Indies in a tour featuring reggae, Jamaican folk songs, calypso and originals combining jazz and Caribbean influences.

- Brecknell** Wilde Theatre, South Hill Park 8.00 pm 0344 484123
Wed 6 November
- London** Queen Elizabeth Hall 7.45 pm 071 928 8800
Thu 7 November
- Bath** University Hall 7.30 pm 0225 826777/466541
Fri 8 November
- Birmingham** Adnan Boulton Hall 7.30 pm 021 236 3889/2392
Sat 9 November
- Bradford** Alhambra Studio 8.00 pm 0274 752000
Sun 10 November
- Sheffield** The Leadmill 8.30 pm 0742 754500 Tue 12 November
- Manchester** Royal Northern College of Music 7.30 pm 061 273 4504/5534 Wed 13 November
- Cheltenham** Town Hall 7.30 pm 0242 523690 Thu 14 November
- Derlington** Great Hall Tel 0803 863073 Fri 15 November

Geri Allen, Charlie Haden, Paul Motian with Louis Sclavis Quartet

21-29 November

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clinic. When the saxophonist sat in with Calderazzo's trio at a subsequent gig, he must have been impressed, because he offered the pianist a job after Kenny Kirkland left the Brecker touring band.

"As a boss, he's the greatest. He ruined me, in a way. Took care of everything. Knew what he wanted to do with the music. Let the other musicians do what they want without losing control. I heard some early tapes of me with the band, and it was awful, I was very nervous, and there was all this nervous-energy playing. Michael must have heard that. But the later stuff was much better, and he must have seen I was going to get it."

Brecker produced *In The Dusk* and plays a couple of solos on it, too. Must have been intimidating.

"I never felt intimidated. I don't know what intimidation is, not when it comes to music, 'cause I don't care. I do the best job I can, and if you don't like it, forget it."

Fighting talk, but actually Joey is a likeable and self-deprecating guy. Ask him about his composing — "Don't ask! I'm not even close!" — and he's, well, modest, even though there are at least a couple of potential perennials on his record. One of the best things, though, is "Loud-Zee", written by suddenly up-and-coming tenor veteran Jerry Bergonzi, who's to be more extensively featured on Joey's next set.

"He's turned around my whole thought-processes in a way. He taught me a lot about note duration and time. When I heard tapes of me playing, I'd be playing very on top of the beat. Jerry helped me to deal with that, and to not play the same style of solo on every song. I can't wait to hear what I sound like when I'm 36."

All on acoustic piano?

"The last tour I did with Michael, I was doing so much electronics

Ah, there's a million guys doing stuff with synths. I don't want to put the time into it. Sometimes I'd be spending six, seven hours a day setting this shit up! Reading manuals! What aspect of music did I do today? Nothing, I had a course in electronics! Right now, it's piano."

TEST DEPARTMENT: SOUND AND VISION

by Mark Sinker

TEST DEPT'S *The Second Coming* was vast, a challenging, critical, devastating spectacle, fittingly the crowning show of Glasgow European City of Culture 1990. It encompassed, somehow, the Heritage Industry, the poll-tax riots, the death of state socialism, the closure of Ravenscraig and the Clyde shipyards, the deep politics of national and cultural nostalgia, TD's own by-now familiar sweat-dripping metalbeat drum orchestras, and Thatcher's fall (which hadn't actually happened, but there you go — industrial-strength AgitPopCult theatre as doomwatch prophecy). It had astounding emotional force: the churning culmination of almost a decade's push towards vaster, darker, more turbulently dramatic shows. It was possibly the best (certainly the most open-ended) thing they've ever done.

News of this chaotic triumph filtered down to London not at all. At Heaven, in January, they achieved a (very) minor riot when they debuted some of the material from their *War tie-in 12*, "New World Order", playing with slides of Saddam Hussein projected over themselves in Yasser Arafat masks. Beyond this, even their continued existence seems to be forgotten in the nation's capital (they've shifted operations completely, from Deptford to Glasgow: their LP release this summer, *Pax Britannia*, admittedly more a summary of projects to date than anything as formally ground-breaking as their recent set-pieces), seems to have been casually ignored everywhere: their 10th Anniversary show, in Brixton, will be the "ordinary" TD roadshow — they've been unable to put on any of their large-scale performances here for some five years, even though *The Goddamn* toured Europe in 88/89 to widespread acclaim.

With *The Second Coming*, they've admitted to taking on a scale of performance that can't get bigger. "I think," Graham Cunningham told me, "that it's probably time to start experimenting with different ways of communication... I see us as having been a mirror to the society all around us — and obviously things really are changing throughout the world."

Does the lack of attention paid them — as complex political mirror, or just as a great evening out — prove anything apart from the inadequacy, at all levels (pop-press, style-press, grownup "quality" press), of the London media-industry, incapable of even minimal connection with the dreams and fears of most of the citizens, young and old, of these islands? In all the rest of Europe — which includes Scotland as much as the still-convulsing East — and even on the inscrutable US rock underground, TD are ever-more significant news. They are pioneers of dissident industrial-cultural insight as it crosses the barren beaches of High Cultural form, early creators of whatever it's going to take to build a culture and a media that can reflect and comment on a world in furiously unpredictable transition. More now than ever, they need to be listened to.

KEYS ON THE HIGHWAY

In our two-part special on jazz piano, **Brian Priestley** meets new Blue Note signing **Geoff Keezer**, a "kinda nerdy looking guy", on a London visit. And over in Philadelphia, **Francis Davis** sips coffee with **Dave Burrell**, regular pianist with David Murray, who's currently writing an opera about Hawaii — with elephants in it!

① **Geoff Keezer**

PIANIST **GEOFF** Keezer has had lots of advantages. Such as joining Art Blakey at age 18 for the last year of Blakey's life, signing with Blue Note at 19 and getting his excellent press bio written by guitarist Jim Hall's daughter Barbara, having both parents music teachers and his father a gigging drummer with a large record collection. Yet the friend who urged me to hear him in New York last year said "He's what we call a kinda nerdy-looking guy who you'd think didn't have the slightest interest in jazz".

Perhaps that was before Keezer exchanged the spectacles for contact lenses, but I'll never know because I missed him, and didn't catch up with him till his recent stint at the Bass Clef. To say his playing blew me away would be an understatement, for here is someone with loads of technique but doing interesting things with it — even in a straightforward context. And, in the same way that his small stature belies his sheer strength at the keys, it doesn't prepare you for his very definite opinions and the firm way he expresses them. For instance, on the 'myth' of European-style technique being an advantage.

"So many of the great jazz pianists didn't play 'classical' music. Wynton Kelly, Horace Silver, Hampton Hawes, Hank Jones, they're not coming out of a classical background. People say Monk didn't have any technique, but that's not true; his technique was what he needed in order for him to play Monk. I don't really think having a lot of facility on an instrument is as important as the statement that you make. I wouldn't advocate not practising, though . . . Your technique ultimately should be so you are able to play what you hear in your mind instantly. That's the level that Art Tatum was at and where Bud Powell was, and Monk and Coltrane and Bird. Clifford Brown. And Dizzy."

One of the joyous aspects of Geoff's own playing is that he will — occasionally — go for something that he misses, but the

esteem he's held in by more senior pianists is undeniable. His mentor and producer of his three albums (two on Sunnyside and the new Blue Note, *Here And Now*) is James Williams, one of his predecessors in the Messengers. Williams also involved him last year in a four-pianist album featuring James and his contemporary Mulgrew Miller, both a full generation older than Keezer, plus Harold Mabern who's a generation older again. The aim of the album, available only in Japan so far, was a tribute to the legendary Phineas Newborn, Mabern's contemporary and like Mabern and Williams from Memphis.

Keezer, on the other hand, went from the obscurity of Eau Claire, Wisconsin to a year at Berklee. But about Newborn he says, "I never got to see him play but his recorded music had a real profound impact on me . . . A lot of things I do come from Phineas, and what I would like to try to do is develop an 'orchestral' approach like Phineas had, in which the right hand and left hand have equal duty. The most common approach right now is playing like a horn-line in the right hand and playing the chords in the left — Mulgrew Miller would probably be number one in that style right now. But there are so many great piano players that play that way, I just want to do something different."

"Ahmad (Jamal) is like that. Not only in terms of his use of space and use of dynamics, but he's divided his hands equally. I haven't found it yet, I'm really searching for something and I don't know what it is. An orchestral approach to the piano but within a modern harmonic context." (Asked for the sources of modern harmony, Geoff instantly names another former Messenger: "Donald Brown. And Billy Childs, and of course Herbie and McCoy.") Hints of the two-handed style on the album — much clearer in the live sets — include left-hand runs, parallel runs, contrary-motion runs, and repeated figures in the right backing percussive chords and octaves from the left which go back beyond Tyner, all the way to Earl Hines.

Geoff Keezer



Hines didn't actually come up in the conversation but, extremely well versed in his favourite subject, Keezer mentioned 40 players in as many minutes, from James P Johnson to Geri Allen (more, if you count people like Bach, Liszt and Scriabin). But, despite learning a great deal from records, "You do have to research the past and find out what happened before, but it's not necessary to copy it . . . I'm inspired more by the people who are playing right now, and the people that I can work with. The young record collectors are living in a different era, it doesn't make any sense. It's equally important to get out and hear music as it's happening now, because it is still happening."

As well as working with the best such as (separately) Benny Golson and Art Farmer, Geoff clearly has the potential to be a brilliant unaccompanied performer. He says "Art Blakey taught me how to play solo – that sounds funny, but it's true! He would leave me on the bandstand, sometimes for up to 45 minutes alone, and point at me and say 'You got it!'" And

Geoff is already an intriguing composer, as five pieces on the latest album prove. ("You hear things at the weirdest times; usually compositions come to you if you're walking down the street or you're in a grocery store. I've a lot of napkins at home with runes scribbled on them.") He also earns points recording rare Ellington tunes (such as the amazing "Agra") and playing different ones live, but he has learned the Ellington lesson that original music grows best out of a working situation.

"You have to have your own group if you want to develop . . . When I did the second record, I ended up writing a lot for a quartet with vibes, and that's what my working band is right now. If (vibist) Steve Nelson played the same thing on any other instrument, that would be fine too. It's *what* he plays which inspires me so much, he's a *swing* musician!"

One final cautionary word from Keezer about records, and about companies that want guest stars or other 'angles' on each album, rather than a regular band. "Coltrane used the same group for five years, and that's what let the music develop." •

② Dave Burrell

DAVE BURRELL, just back from Paris, is sitting in his Philadelphia kitchen, having coffee with me and his wife, the poet Monika Larsson, and explaining how he hooked up with David Murray.

"In the late 70s, when I still lived in New York, I used to spend a lot of time in Soho, at a loft owned by Roberta Garrison, the dancer, who was Jimmy Garrison's widow. This became the place for the new guys in town to meet the relative oldtimers, like myself. David and James Newton were just in from California, and there were articles in all the papers about how they and the guys from Chicago, like Chico Freeman and the members of Air, had the right approach, as opposed to those of us who had been in New York since the 60s."

The crowd from Slug's, in other words, many of whom had lived at 77 East Third, before the building became the unofficial East Coast headquarters of the Hell's Angels, who, with the super's cooperation, turned the basement into a qualude factory and pushed Burrell's piano through the eighth-floor window while he was on the road with Archie Shepp...

Ah, the 60s. But that's another story. Back to the Murray connection.

"Well, many of us weren't so happy about being invaded by these new guys who we felt were stealing work from us. So there was usually a little bit of hostility in the air at Roberta's dinners. But there was this other, friendlier vibe, of feeling that we were all in this together and wondering what people from other parts of the country had been up to. One night, after dinner, David said to everybody, 'Let's do "Naima", and we did - me, him, Chico, Grachan Moncur, Eddie Jefferson, and I don't remember who else."

"I was busy with Archie Shepp back then, but the experience of playing with David stuck with me. And Sunny Murray used to bring both him and me to Philly whenever he had a job there. So we got used to playing together, although I didn't begin to work with him steadily until 1987, when I called him up and suggested doing something together and for a minute, I think, he had me mixed up with Stanley Cowell."

"David's very lucky in business. He works more than anybody I know. Just being in some of his groups, I'm working more now than I ever did being with Archie Shepp fulltime. I'm music director for David's octet, and the piano player in one of his quartets, the one with Wilber Morris on bass and Tani Tabal on drums. Plus the cooperative groups, like the Lucky Four and the Last Of The Hip Men, when he's offered a record date as a leader that he can't do under his own name because of contractual obligations."

PLUS THE duets, as documented on 1989's *Daybreak* (Gazell), whose title ballad, written by Burrell, is as beautiful a piece of music based on a series of minor-to-major chords as you're ever likely to hear, saved from mere pretentiousness by Burrell's bass-clef hammering and Murray's falsetto decimation of the theme toward the end. Remarkably, *Daybreak* was

just Burrell's second album as a leader for a US label (11 others have been released in Europe and Japan). But he was back in the studio in May to record an album of Jelly Roll Morton compositions at the suggestion of Gazell's Sam Charters, the noted jazz and blues historian whose books include a fictional biography of Morton.

The exposure with Murray hasn't made Burrell a "star" (are there jazz stars any more?), but it has focused attention on him as an overlooked veteran of an era in which pianists were easy to overlook.

In the early 70s, a friend of mine heard Shepp's band at a club in Philadelphia and told me that Burrell sounded great. Then, after giving it some thought, he qualified his statement: "At least, he *sounded* like he sounded great, if you know what I mean."

I did. Volume was just part of the problem, though. When Burrell arrived in New York after his graduation from Berklee in 1965, piano was becoming identified as the enemy - European hegemony in a pop-up box. Unless played by Cecil Taylor (McCoy Tyner was by then laying out much of the time behind Coltrane, the instrument was considered too well-tempered to hold its own against the era's smashing drums and horns

Against these odds, Burrell quietly went about the business of forging a personal style from the demands made on him by the different leaders he played with in the 1960s. "Pharoah [Sanders] wanted a drone," recalls Burrell, who gives the impression of being pretty well-tempered himself. Bald on top but still lanky at the age of 50, he wears glasses, speaks in an inflectionless baritone, and fits the stereotype of the university professor, though his formal teaching experience has been limited to residencies here and there and two years at Queens College in New York under an anti-poverty programme in the 70s. "That prayer-like, harp-kind of thing that Alice Coltrane did behind him and Trane in Trane's band after McCoy left. But Marson Brown favoured more of an Ornette Coleman approach. He didn't want the piano to play the chords. He wanted it to play a one-note unison with the horns on the heads of his tunes, and the heads were complicated and tricky."

More than a decade before Henry Threadgill made it hip to dig Scott Joplin again, Burrell wrote a rag for his 1968 debut album, which also included a medley of tunes from *West Side Story*. A year later, for BYG, in the aftermath of the Pan-African Festival no less, he reworked material from Puccini's *La Bohème*. Given such evidence, he has long enjoyed a reputation as a "song" man within the jazz avant-garde. So it was surprising to hear him say that he didn't know very much jazz or pop standards before joining Archie Shepp in 1969, at the tail end of what Burrell describes as Shepp's "angry period, when he was glaring at the front row of the audience, which stared back at him in his Charlie Parker-inspired wardrobe, and playing so hard and fast and long that there would be a pool of sweat in front of him and his fingers would sometimes bleed.

Dave Burrell



"But he was also playing a lot of Ellington, and he told me I had to master the standard repertoire. That area of my development had been stunted, because I had never been in a band where the pianist was expected to know how to make a nice intro to a ballad. Archie was a very good pianist himself, and he would show me the chord movements. He and [trombonist] Roswell Rudd would tell me that if I was going to play with them, I had to know 'Sophisticated Lady' and 'Prelude To A Kiss', and so on. I said OK, I want to play those songs, but I also want to play those Ornette-ish, post-bop one-note unisons. I want to play the vamps that Pharoah and Coltrane used. Coltrane was my idol, and I wanted to scream on piano like the horns were doing, but I wanted structure and beauty along with the scream."

ANOTHER SURPRISE: before accepting Chatters's invitation, Burrell had little working knowledge of Jelly Roll Morton, even though his own pieces tend, like Morton's, to be

multi-thematic, with what sound like conscious allusions to earlier styles of jazz. (His solos likewise tend to bracket frolicsome ragtime or stride episodes with pinging dissonance and blood-on-the-keys assaults.)

"It's been an education," Burrell says, offering for inspection a book of Morton transcriptions by James Daggony. "When I bought this in New York, the music looked difficult and probably boring. Well, it *is* difficult, but not at all boring. I just told Sam that if I'm going to do this right, I have to learn all of Jelly Roll Morton's work, not just the pieces I'm going to record. That's the essence of jazz piano right there, in the work of that one composer."

"I remember a time in the early 70s when I was booked in advance every weekend, usually just playing for transportation money and a share of the doot, but glad to be working. But now I don't have time to take most of the jobs I'm offered, what with being on the toad with David, learning Jelly Roll Morton, and working on the opera with Monika."

Dave Burrell

The opera. In talking about it, Burrell and Larsson, who began work on it as composer and librettist soon after becoming husband and wife in 1978, tend to finish each other's sentences. Called *Windward Passage*, it's set in Hawaii, where Burrell, who was born in Middletown, Ohio, grew up, moving there with his parents when he was five (Burrell's father, an early race man, who still lives in Kailua, taught sociology at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu).

At a loss for words after admitting that the opera is "semi-autobiographical", Burrell asks his Swedish-born wife if she can explain it.

"It's about the maturation of a young black man at the same time that Hawaii matured into statehood, in 1959," explained Larsson, who was living in Honolulu with her first husband, a scientist at the University of Hawaii, when she met Burrell in 1974. "It was a very traumatic experience for Dave and his friends. They had a little musical group at that time, which played at the statehood celebration, although their hearts were not in it, because the land developers who moved in [in anticipation of statehood] had changed their way of life. In Hawaii today, when there's a hurricane, the homes of the indigenous people, who were forced out of the valleys and the plateaus and are very, very poor, are the only homes that get hit. Meanwhile, Waikiki is one of the biggest tourist traps in the world."

An opera co-written by an African-American and a naturalized Swede, about the plight of Polynesians and Samoans,

Windward Passage has multi-cultural written all over it, which should mean that somebody will eventually stage it. This far, portions of it have been sung by choirs in Philadelphia and Europe, and Burrell has recorded instrumental versions of most of its movements on his own LPs or on those with Murray. But Murray has been talking it up to potential backers on his travels, and there have even been feelers from the Metropolitan Opera.

"Hilda Harris, the great mezzo-soprano, was one of the first people to encourage us," Larsson explains. "We wrote the role of Sarah, the boy's mother, for her. Not just her voice, but her looks, her entire manner. When we had only the first act written, she and her husband who is a concert promoter, put us in touch with Maestro [James] Levine of the Met, whose only concern was 'Is it a grand opera? Will it fill up the stage?' So Dave and I went home and wrote the second act, and it's so big that . . ."

"We put elephants in there," Burrell interrupts.

"Just about," Larsson said. "Damn near."

"A company in Atlanta said they could do it, because they could get the Atlanta Symphony for free," Burrell says. "I told them we didn't need a symphony. We needed a choir, eight principal singers, and a 20-piece, Ellington-type orchestra with no violins. They said, 'Who's going to pay for that?' And how can it be an opera with no violins? I said, well, it *is* an opera . . ."

"It's a grand opera," Larsson interjects, laughing.

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New books on David Stone Martin,
Memphis, Mozart

Jazz Graphics – David Stone Martin
BY MANEK DAVER
Graphics-Sha £22.50

BACK IN the 1950s, a New York art director could instruct one of his assistants to "give me a David Stone Martin" and get in return a semi-abstract line drawing that signified what was "hip" in that conformist period. Even a young commercial artist named Andy Warhol, a few years before art world stardom, could do a competent "David Stone Martin", as his covers for Blue Note bear out. To jazz fans of that period, David Stone Martin's 200 odd covers for Norman Granz's Clef and Norgran labels represent the closest visual equivalents to jazz that have yet been produced.

Manek Daver's *Jazz Graphics – David Stone Martin*, a bi-lingual retrospective published in Japan and found in many London bookshops, is a loving and informed tribute to an artist whose artistry is only now being fully recognized. The book offers intelligent commentary, full-colour reproduction of a representative selection of Martin's record jackets and a sampling of the rarely seen jazz drawings that Martin has done under commission for a Japanese collector.

As the art of the record jacket vanishes with the hegemony of the CD and its miniature surface, it's worth remembering that Martin happened to be at the right place and time with the introduction of the long playing record in the early 50s. Except for boxed sets, 78rpm discs came in unadorned brown sleeves which record clerks sold through a combination of sales pitch and the luscious booth.

The "33" LP was made of vinyl, an upgrade over fragile shellac and this led to the first self-service record stores. How did you make a sale to a browser thumbing through a record bin? Most record labels thought "girls" – the top of that form being William Claxton's work for Contemporary. Norman Granz, whose Clef and Norgran labels were aimed at the specialist, went with David Stone Martin's distinctive illustrations and often striking layouts.

Martin's portraits of musicians avoid mythologuing; the world of David Stone Martin art is filled with men and women of great dignity and quiet power. On the classic

CLIFF SERIES



Jazz Giant, Bud Powell is walking towards a far away piano in a posture straight out of Hemingway's "A man has to do what he has to do".

It is a commentary on the "coffee shop moderne" world of 50s graphics and designs that Martin did little work for Granz's Verve label, an upscale, mass market label that replaced his earlier specialist ventures. As jazz developed a mass audience, the grand gesture of colour photography replaced Martin's little hipster riffs. After his tenure with Granz, his cover art was limited to specialist labels such as Progressive and Mary Lou Williams's Mary label – coming full circle from his work with Moses Asch.

In addition to his record jackets, Martin did an enormous amount of work in other mediums. He frequently did magazine covers for *Time* and *Downbeat*. He did posters for more than 50 Broadway shows – the most famous is his one-eyed Mack the Knife for

The Threepenny Opera. He did the credit title sequences for movies like *Gigi*, *Paint Your Wagon* and hundreds of programme titles for the CBS television network.

A stroke in 1977 seriously affected his mobility, but left his drawing hand unimpaired. He lives in New London, Connecticut with his wife Chen – still accepting students as well as commissions for drawings. In 1986, a major retrospective of his graphic work was held at the performing arts library at Manhattan's Lincoln Center. In October, Japan's Tama Art University had a retrospective of his record covers. Add to those events, *Jazz Graphics* – the first time since these albums were first released that Martin's original cover work has been returned to print – and you have the rediscovery of an artist who did so much to graphically construct the social identity of jazz in the 1950s.

JORLEWIS

Rythm Oil

BY STANLEY BOOTH

Jonathan Cape, £15.99

STANLEY BOOTH is the American journalist who was commissioned by The Rolling Stones in 1968 to write their authorised biography. *The True Adventures Of The Rolling Stones* was slightly delayed – Booth was beaten up by Hell's Angels, run over by a truck, sent to prison, suffered epileptic fits while coming off drugs – and didn't materialise for 15 years, which would be laughable if it hadn't turned out to be so gripping: a suicidally intimate portrait of the Stones' black journey through the 60s. And now Stanley Booth has done the same for the blues.

Rythm Oil: A Journey Through The Music Of The American South is a collection of essays written over 25 years by a Memphis music junkie. Booth interviews BB King, Al Green, Keith Richards, Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top and other musicians whose common thread is the blues. But really it's a portrait of Memphis, full of insights you can only get from living in a city. Men like Willie Mitchell, Rufus Thomas, Robert Johnson and Sam Phillips stalk through every page.

Booth is a talented writer, with an equal talent for being in the right place, right time. He goes to Mississippi John Hurt's dirt-yard funeral in Avalon, Mississippi, he is allowed into the presence of Elvis at Graceland; he hangs out at the Sex studios in McLenore Street watching Steve Cropper and Otis Redding write "Dock Of The Bay"; he tells you what books BB King has in his office bookshelf (*The World's Great Men Of Color*, *Female Sexual Anatomy*, all stuff like that) and how Al Green preaches at the Full Gospel Tabernacle.

But better still are the portraits of lesser-known local musicians. 20s blues star Furry Lewis, subsequently a street cleaner, R&B guitar wildman Charlie Freeman, leader of The Mar-Keys, who died of an overdose in 1973; and phenomenal jazz pianist Phineas Newborn Jr, who descended into drug addiction, madness and death. Booth tells these sad, chilling stories with love and affection and a wry humour.

Some parts, such as the review of a Flying

Burrito Brothers album, are pretty dispensable, and others leave you feeling a little short-changed – Booth sometimes hopes that his personal, fanciful style can make up for slim material. But some sections are as good as anything ever written about the blues.

Stanley Booth has tried to put into writing what Furry, BB, Phineas and Otis put into their music – and to a surprising degree, he has succeeded.

PHIL MCNEILL

Mozart's Symphonies

BY NEAL ZASLAW

Clarendon Press £17.95

Mozart In Vienna

BY VOLKMAR BRAUNBEHRENS

Oxford University Press £9.99

The New Shostakovich

BY IAN MACDONALD

Oxford University Press £8.99

THREE BOOKS new to paperback, each with an individual slant on the practice of musical biography. Neal Zaslaw makes it clear that *Mozart's Symphonies* is neither conventional biography nor musical analysis, but "a study in music history". In fact, a little biography and analysis inevitably leak into what is actually a fascinating detective story, as Zaslaw tracks down the 90-plus symphonies now attributed to or associated with Mozart and examines the likely authenticity of each, its place in the Mozart canon and the circumstances of its composition. It's an exhaustive study, highly-readable, and Zaslaw's brief sorties into criticism make you wish he had found more space for analysis. As compensation, there are two concluding chapters on "Performance Practice" (based in part on the author's experience as "musicological consultant" to the Academy Of Ancient Music for their Mozart symphony recordings) and on "Meanings For Mozart Symphonies", in which Zaslaw traces the rise of the symphony, Mozart's part in this and the various relationships between his music, his political views and the Enlightenment culture of 18th

century Europe. A brilliant book.

Mozart In Vienna is a step closer to conventional biography, though the special strength of Braunbehrens's approach is his grasp of social history. So, as well as an account of Mozart's life from his arrival in Vienna in 1781 to his death there in 1791, the book offers a wealth of information about, for instance, class society in the city, Freemasonry, Mozart's household economics and – typical of the author's many intriguing digressions – a brief life of the African ex-slave Angelo Soliman, from whose Viennese experiences Braunbehrens weaves a subtle counterpoint to the implicit anti-racism of *Die Entföhrung aus dem Serail*. Braunbehrens also questions the various myths which have grown up around Mozart – his poverty, his supposedly feckless wife, his mysterious death, etc – and manages to explode or at least deflate most of them with his painstaking research.

Dmitri Shostakovich died only 16 years ago, but already the myth of the composer as a loyal supporter of Communism and the Soviet state has been effectively scuppered – not least by Shostakovich himself in his controversial memoir, *Testimony*. The authenticity of that book has been disputed, but, as Ian MacDonald reports in the opening chapter of his biography, its essential truthfulness is now widely accepted. MacDonald is the first writer to really test that truth against the evidence of the music and, if *The New Shostakovich* is the most conventional of these books in form – a chronological narrative of the man and his works – in content, it is the most revelatory. The backbone of the book is MacDonald's "decoding" of many of Shostakovich's major works to reveal a secret, dissident history of Russia through the nightmare decades of Stalinist dictatorship. It's a gripping, often horrifying, story and MacDonald astutely matches the politics to the music, making you re-listen and re-think your responses to the latter with disconcerting regularity. I'm not sure I'd agree with every detail of his interpretations, but the man thrust of his argument and most of his conclusions are indisputable. A magnificent reappraisal of one of the century's greatest and, it seems, most misunderstood artists.

GRAHAM LOCK

This month: **Leon Redbone** talks to Philip Watson

Each month we test a musician with a series of records which they're asked to comment on and "mark out of five" – with no prior knowledge of what it is they're hearing!

ALTHOUGH HE is probably best known in the UK for "So, Relax", his music to the InterCity "Kick off your shoes" commercial, Leon Redbone is a musician of infinitely greater resources. Time-locked in a 78rpm era somewhere between 1900 and 1935, singer, guitarist, banjo and harmonica player Redbone eschews modern popular forms in favour of earlier blues, ragtime, vaudeville and minstrel show traditions. Consequently his low, gravelly baritone is influenced by such singers as Enrico Caruso, Jelly Roll Morton and Bing Crosby.

Redbone is also renowned for his on-stage theatrics – between tunes he entertains with light comedy, visual gags and hand-shadow shows – and in the US for writing music to various TV and radio commercials for such products as Budweiser, Kodak and Afta, the great stain remover. His most recent UK releases are *Sagar*, his seventh, and *Christmas Island* (both Private Music), a collection of Yuletide favourites including "Where Christmas" and "Frosty The Snowman", which is to be re-promoted in November. A reluctant and inscrutable interviewee, Redbone looks like a cross between Frank Zappa and Groucho Marx, and he answers in a humorous, considered, knowledgeable drawl. Read his responses out aloud in a style as close to a sober WC Fields as you can muster.

HARRY RESER

"Crackerjack" from *Banjo Crackerjack* 1922-30 (Yazoo). Reser (bj).

Well, I haven't heard that recording. It's the (George) Van Eps school of playing, but it's not him. It must be Harry Reser. It was marvellous playing, but some of his stuff wouldn't amount to a tin of beans if it was around today. It gives you a light sense, but it wasn't thought-provoking. The things which affect me the most are things which are completely morose, romantic and melancholy, rather than exciting. Yet this was probably perfect. I wasn't awfully taken with all of the notes, but the way they came out – that's about as good as it gets. Five. And a little banjo goes a long way. I have an article on a man in Ohio who killed his wife with a banjo, in fact, he used two banjos

to do it. So they can come in handy for other things.

SONNY TERRY

"I've Been Your Doggie Since I Born Your Man" from *The Folkways Years 1944-63* (Smithsonian Folkways). Brownie McGhee (g); Terry (hmc, voc); JC Brunne (bones).

(Immediately) Sonny Terry. Brownie McGhee. Sonny's certainly the greatest harmonica player in that style. He fits into the classification of the purely acoustic acts, back to the real roots of the blues and the traditions of the 1880s variety shows. This is the real stuff. There's no frills to it, there can be no luxury tax imposed on that kind of playing. It's simple and as pure as you can get from a person to an instrument, without going from person to instrument to electricity to amplifiers and all that nonsense. From the standpoint of the innovative and pure harmonica player that Sonny was, it's a five.

BING CROSBY

"Play A Simple Melody" from *Bing Crosby & Friends* (Magic). Crosby (v), Groucho Marx (uke, v)

I've never heard that before. It's Groucho Marx with – not Danny Kaye. Let me listen to it one more time. Well, it's a familiar voice, but I don't know it's Bing.

It's Bing Crosby! Was it after an operation? It didn't sound anything like him, it was so off-key. He was a wonderful singer, but this track sounds awful. In fact it's so bad, it's unrecognisable. What I admire about his singing is his vocal technique which seems to be effortless, it has a naturalness like Caruso. The thing that makes Crosby unique in the annals of popular music is that he was the first person to sing in a relaxed tone. Before Bing Crosby, everybody was pretty formal – the diction had to be formal and the vowels pronounced correctly. Bing relaxed the tone into a conversational language.

Mark:

What, based on that performance or his life? Well, it's zero for that track, but for Bing's musical achievement and contribution, five.

CLIFF "UKELELE IKE" EDWARDS

"Fascinatin' Rhythm" from *Fascinatin' Rhythm* (Totem). Edwards (uke, v); Tony Motrola (g); Joe Tarro (b).

(Immediately) Cliff Edwards. Cliff Edwards

was a better singer than Bing Crosby in many ways, but because he had that destructive edge to his life, he wasn't as well-known. You see everybody has their own personality to contend with and in his case he was a big boozier, and a party type of a person, and, who knows, he had health problems as well. I'm sure. But Edwards gets five because he was a wonderful conveyor of a tune and he was able to do it even if he was totally out of it, drunk out of his mind.

But this is very definitely from the period I love. The years between 1900 and 1935 were the world's attempt to be civilized, and there was a strong movement for people to try to release themselves from the shackles of imperialism and create a more equitable world.

GEORGE FORMBY

"It's Turned Out Nice Again" (Regal Zonophone MR 3066, 78rpm. Formby (v, uke) with orchestra.

(Starts whistling along) It's the Lancashire man George Formby. I've always liked George Formby, but if I had to be critical I would say that he was the utilitarian version of Cliff Edwards. Because what he did was to be entertaining. He was not bogged down by being a depressed individual, he wasn't going to sing the blues, he didn't have that edge to him. He was the ultimate and consummate entertainer. And he did that about as good as you can get. As far as getting any emotion out of anybody, it didn't happen. But nobody can really analyse or criticise him and his vocal ability – that's not the point – his voice was perfect for reaching people in a comedic way. It's another five.

DJANGO REINHARDT

"Old Man River" from *Naxos* (Vogue). Reinhardt (g), Joseph Reinhardt (g); Eugène Vees (g); Stéphane Grappelli (vn); Fred Ermelin (b).

That's Grappelli and Django. This is a late recording – they were at their best in 1934 because it was fresh then and they weren't trying to be experimental. Plus, let's not forget the material from that earlier period was more stable in its formula of progression; they were just good basic tunes. The late '40s, early '50s stuff went too way out on a limb. But then again the whole world was a little out there in the '50s, glazing on the rewards and spoils of WWII and that recording was not the best. Grappelli missed all kinds of notes. For Django, top marks



STAN FREBERG

"Green Christmas" from *The Best Of The Capitol Years* (Capitol). Freberg (v); Daws Butler, Marvin Miller, Will Wright (v) with The Jud Conlon Rhythmaires & Billy May's Music.

It's not the kinda thing I'm interested in. Remotely. Who is it?

It's Stan Freberg. It's his satire on advertising. Well, it wasn't funny. (Pause)

What do you say to people who think your advertising work isn't uncomfortable with the sincerity of the rest of your music?

I say they're idiots. They don't seem to realise that they survive in a world of advertising, and they themselves are responsible for it. If they wish to retreat from this advertising world, they'll have to go to one of those retreats in Greece where they only allow one sex and praying from morning to

night. The justification for doing it is not just that, basically, I wouldn't be doing this interview without it, but that everybody and everything advertises, including animals. In fact they are genetically designed to advertise — they flash their sexual readiness. And that's exactly what mankind, after million of years, has devised — a means of flashing the necessary response from civilisation.

Marks?
Zero.

JELLY ROLL MORTON

"Mamie's Blues" from *New Orleans Memories Plus Two (1939)* (Commodore). Morton (p, v).

(After three notes on the piano) "Mamie's Blues". Jelly Roll. My opinion of Jelly Roll almost matches his opinion of himself. *Almost*. I'm one of those people who would even go along with his claim that he invented

jazz. I'd actually give him that. Because those '26 RCA recordings, with his wonderful arrangements, the Red Hot Peppers, with select musicians, has got to be the ultimate in jazz recording. Once you've listened to those, you have to disregard everybody's playing, certainly today. Where's the attention paid to the melody? Where's the order in all the stuff today? Jelly would have hated today's society and music — which allows everybody to do what the hell they like as long as they're having a good time. His ultimate goal was not only to make everything in a perfect order, with some emotion, but to bring to the foreground the beauty of the melody. And for that reason, if I had to name one person who more or less encompasses all the thoughts on music that I have it would have to be Jelly Roll.

Marks?

You'd have to give Jelly Roll a perfect mark, whatever that perfect mark is — five or 500.

Joseph Haydn · miracle man

Joseph Haydn put the class into classicism. He wrote the first great symphonies and string quartets, inspired Mozart, taught Beethoven and, when he died in 1809, was Europe's most revered composer. Graham Lock looks first at his remarkable life and then surveys a CD legacy that includes such perennial favourites as 'The Clock', 'The Surprise' and 'The Miracle' symphonies.

Illustration by Paul McLaughlin.

① The Man Who Invented Classical Music

"THE INEXHAUSTIBLE, the wonderful, the sublime HAYDN," enthused London's *Morning Chronicle* in 1794, echoing the fact that by the closing years of the 18th century Joseph Haydn had become the most celebrated composer in Europe.

It was an astonishing success story. Son of a poor rural wheelwright, Haydn had spent the first 58 years of his life within the near-vicinity of Vienna, 28 of those years in loyal service to Prince Nicholas Esterházy, an ardent music-lover who liked to keep his talented *Kapellmeister* on hand at all times. When Haydn had to call off a planned visit to England in the early 1780s, London's *Gazette & New Daily Advertiser* waxed apoplectic. "This wonderful man, who is the Shakespeare of music, and the triumph of the age in which we live, is doomed to reside in the court of a miserable German prince . . . a place little better than a dungeon, subject to the domineering spirit of a petty Lord, and the clamorous temper of a scolding wife." The paper went on to suggest that "some aspiring youths" should kidnap the composer and "transplant him back to Great Britain".

Haydn might have agreed with the *Gazette* about his disastrous marriage but he knew there were compensations to his near-total musical isolation (He spent most of his time at the prince's residences at Eisenstadt and Esterháza, even nearby Vienna was usually out of bounds.) "I was cut off from the world," he declared in a much-quoted statement, "there was no one near me to torment me or make me doubt myself, and so I had to become original."

That originality took many guises, but central to Haydn's achievement was the development of the symphony and the string quartet, genres which he took from their common root in lightweight *divertimenti* and fashioned, almost single-handed (Mozart has only ally of note), into two of the most expressive and profound forms in the history of Western music. Indeed, given their prominence in the repertoire of the

last 200 years and the fact that, to a large degree, the ground rules he laid down still hold sway, we can say, with only a little journalistic licence, that Joseph Haydn was the man who invented classical music.

HE WAS born in the village of Rohrau, on the Austro-Hungarian border, on 31 March 1732. An early fascination with, and aptitude for, music led to his recruitment, at the age of eight, into the choir of Vienna's St Stephen's Cathedral, and later – after he was expelled in 1749 for cutting off the pigtail of a fellow chorboy! – to a decade or so of near-destitution as a struggling musician, giving lessons in the day then playing violin in the small serenade bands that roamed Vienna's streets each evening. Inspired by the music of C P E Bach and helped by lessons from the famed composer/singer Porpora, the young Haydn survived mostly on "my zeal for composition".

Finally, the breaks came and in 1761 he was appointed assistant *Kapellmeister* by Prince Paul Anton Esterházy, head of one of Hungary's greatest aristocratic families. When Paul Anton died ten months later, his brother Nicholas became head of the family and Haydn's new employer. Nicholas promoted him to full *Kapellmeister* in 1766 but required his close attendance at the Esterházy estates for the next 25 years. Not until Nicholas died in 1790 was Haydn finally free to travel and his two visits to England, in 1791–92 and 1794–95, set the seal on his fame as well as inspiring many of his finest works, including his last great symphonies and piano trios.

His final years back in Vienna were marred by sadness, as failing health and old age began to rake their roll. The biggest frustration was that inspiration still flowed but he no longer had the strength or will-power to wring things out and work them through. "Musical ideas pursue me to the point of torture. I cannot get rid of them, they stand before me like a wall. If it is an *allegro* that pursues me, my pulse beats faster, I cannot sleep; if an *adagio*, I find my pulse beating slowly. My imagination plays upon me as if I were a keyboard. I really am



Joseph Haydn

a living keyboard." In 1803 he began a new string quartet, but could only finish two movements: he knew his composing days were over. His last public appearance was on 27 March 1808 at a performance of his oratorio *The Creation*. A fanfare of trumpets sounded as they carried him in, but, obviously infirm, he had to leave at the interval. His ex-pupil Beethoven was among the crowds who knelt to kiss his hand as he left. He died 14 months later, on 31 May 1809, as the French army was overrunning Vienna; still, thousands of people attended his memorial service in Vienna's Schottenkirche. Because he had never written a Requiem himself, they played extracts from the one left unfinished 18 years before by Mozart, who had been his closest friend and remains one of his few musical equals.

BEFORE THE year was out, Haydn's skull had been stolen from his grave (it was not reinterred until 1954). Luckily, we now have less grisly ways of trying to ascertain the factors which lay behind his musical genius. The years of service to Prince Nicholas, though much decried, must have played a vital role in Haydn's maturation; but just how did the particular circumstances of his employment help to transform the promising newcomer into an assured, sophisticated master?

Haydn's duties as *Kapellmeister* were innumerable but principally involved composing, and running the Esterházy orchestra – two mutually-beneficial activities. "As head of an orchestra," he recounted, "I could experiment, observe what heightened the effect and what weakened it, and so could improve, expand, cut, take risks." In fact, he seems to have operated much like later jazz bandleaders such as Charles Mingus and Duke Ellington: showing the musicians what he wanted by playing it to them, writing with specific instrumentalists in mind, trying things in different ways on different nights, generally working *by ear* – and drawing many of his ideas from his daily after-breakfast improvising sessions at the clavichord. (Two other slightly more fanciful jazz reference-points: Haydn's music resembles that of Thelonious Monk in its high levels of humour and surprise, its astute uses of silence and dissonance, and that of Anthony Braxton in its thoroughgoing explorations of structure, its brilliant synthesis of new and old forms.)

This close working-relationship with his Esterházy musicians is one reason why Haydn's symphonies (at least prior to No's 82–104, nearly all written for other, larger orchestras) tend to sound much more vivacious when played by the small orchestral forces, and on the period instruments, for which they were originally conceived.

Two other important aspects of Haydn's Esterházy service concern Prince Nicholas's love for the baryton (a kind of cumbersome viola da gamba, now defunct) and his increasing obsession with opera. A proficient performer on the baryton, Nicholas demanded a steady supply of new tris to play from his *Kapellmeister* and Haydn composed over 100 in total, mostly pleasant if unexceptional works in themselves, yet – as

critics have noted – undoubtedly the grindstone on which he whetted the finesse of his later string quartet writing. Similarly, Nicholas's insatiable demand for opera in the later 1770s and 1780s, which required Haydn to stage one or two new productions per month, often for months at a time, led to the composer's immersion in a form of music which, as Charles Rosen argues in *The Classical Style*, decisively shaped his later symphonic writing, bringing dramatic clarity and coherence to his already formidable play with tonal relationships.

The comic spirit abroad in Haydn's later works may also derive in part from *opera buffa*, but comes too from the sometimes awkward eccentricities which had first proclaimed his distinction. These were suddenly evident in a burst of agitated creativity which occurred in the few years around 1770, now known as Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* period, the name (meaning Storm and Stress) taken from a middle-European, proto-Romantic literary movement which actually came after most of Haydn's writing in this new style, characterised chiefly by his exploration of minor keys and evocations of apparently stormy and disturbed feelings. (The common assumption is that some emotional crisis in Haydn's life sparked these changes, but no one has yet been able to identify a specific cause.)

Haydn abandoned – or exhausted – the *Sturm und Drang* style within a few years, but its value to him is underlined by the fact that many of his significant "first steps" took place at this time. Notably in his six "Sun" string quartets, *op 20*, in which he established both the importance of thematic development and the very notion of the quartet as four individual voices; and in the *Sturm und Drang* symphonies, such as No's 26, 39, 44, 49 and 52, in which he breaks through the existing idea of instrumental music as peripheral entertainment and begins to really extend both the technical possibilities and the emotional range of the symphonic form.

IF THE brief *Sturm und Drang* period produced the most inventive and arresting music of his first two decades as a composer, the next two, from c1780 to 1802 (date of his last major work, the *Harmozomeis*), brought forth an almost-constant stream of masterpieces which simply seemed to get better and better. The influence of Mozart, with whom he met and became close friends in the 1780s, was a crucial factor, but no less important were his two trips to England, where the new challenges on offer sparked some spectacular triumphs.

Haydn arrived in England on New Year's Day 1791, an appropriate date to mark the extraordinary final flowering of his creative genius. After 30 years of courtly servitude, he was a free man; after 30 years of Esterházy obscurity, he was suddenly a public celebrity. The English loved him: he was feted by the Royal Family, awarded an honorary degree by Oxford University, raved over by the critics and adored by London's concert-goers, reputedly Europe's most sophisticated audience. His two trips to England took him to dizzying heights of fame, brought him undreamt-of wealth – and, to top it all, he fell in love for one last time, enjoying a discreet,

touching *affaire de coeur* with the widow Rebecca Schroeter. No wonder he responded with some of the greatest music of his life.

In the 1790s, though he was now in his 60s, Haydn wrote his finest works in nearly all of the major genres to which he turned his attention: symphony, string quartet, piano trio, piano sonata, concerto, oratorio, mass. In particular, the London Symphonies, *No's 93–104*, are works of astonishing power and vitality, dizzyingly bravura displays of intellectual grandeur, dashing flamboyance and radiant humour. Then, back in Vienna in 1797, he completed what is arguably the pinnacle of his string quartet music, the set of six "Erdody" quartets, *op 76*. And then he followed that with his most splendid vocal works, a series of six masses which represented his last commission from the Esterházy family, and two oratorios, *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, inspired by hearing Handel's oratorios in London and, in the case of the former, his most worried-over and self-conscious masterpiece, the crowning glory of an illustrious career. "There is no one," Mozart had declared, "who can do it all – to joke and to terrify, to evoke laughter and profound sentiment – and all equally well: except Joseph Haydn."

② Haydn On CD

a) Symphonies



THE ONLY complete set of Haydn symphonies currently on CD is that made by Antal Dorati/Philharmonia Hungarica in the 1970s, now reissued in eight, mid-price, four-CD volumes (Decca). Taken as a whole, the project is a magnificent achievement, with musical

standards consistently high. The orchestra use modern instruments, which sometimes leads to undue homogeneity of texture, but more regrettable are a mix that dampens down the horns and percussion, and Dorati's tendency to take the slow movements and, especially, the minuets at too deliberate a tempo. This means that, in the case of the more popular symphonies such as the Paris (*No's 82–87*) and London sets, where competition is fierce, more recent recordings often have the edge. But the special value of the Dorati cycle is that it makes available many delightful works which cannot be heard elsewhere – in particular, several of the earlier symphonies and that overlooked block (approx *No's 53–81*) which falls between the *Sturm and Drang* period and the celebrated Paris and London eras. So my recommended volumes are five and six: *Symphonies 60–71* (Decca 425 920–2) and *Symphonies 72–83* (Decca 425 925–2).

Three other complete cycles are now under way, all of which offer different takes on authenticity. I have reservations about the recordings by Adam Fischer/Austro-Hungarian Haydn Orchestra (Nimbus), if their five-CD box-set of the London Symphonies is representative. These performances are expansive, almost post-Romantic in style, which for me diffuses

much of the music's power. But a greater problem is the sound quality: these symphonies were recorded in the Eisenstadt concert hall where Haydn premiered many of his works, but the result on disc is a very reverberant acoustic which makes the music both boomy and blurry, so that much of Haydn's finer detail is lost.

Roy Goodman/The Hanover Band (Hyperion) have released four CDs from their projected cycle, each comprising three symphonies: *No's 6–8, 45–47, 73–75, 90–92*. These are brisk, bracing performances on period instruments, though – if Dorati can be ponderous – Goodman often sounds rushed. A further complaint is that Goodman has the harpsichord very upfront in the mix: it quickly becomes an irritating clangour, especially in the late symphonies where it's like an aural sore thumb amidst Haydn's increasingly subtle use of orchestral timbres.

Christopher Hogwood/Academy Of Ancient Music (L'Oiseau Lyre) have taken the controversial step of omitting the harpsichord continuo altogether from their cycle of the symphonies (also on period instruments), from which just one three-disc volume has appeared to date. Curiously, this is volume four, which covers nine symphonies (*No's 21–24, 28–31, 34*) from the mid-1760s, just prior to the *Sturm und Drang* period. I particularly enjoyed the performance of *No 31 'The Hornsignal'*, with a dashing posh horn fanfare that lends the first movement its infectious swing, but whether or not you'll like the Hogwood set probably depends on your feelings about the lack of harpsichord. The liner notes explain that there is no hard evidence that Haydn ever used a harpsichord continuo in his symphonies (and several suggestions that he didn't). The counter-argument seems to be that it's unthinkable that 18th century orchestral music would be played without it.

The Hogwood is the set which I'll be collecting, but in the meantime there are several excellent mini-sets and one-off discs which deserve your attention. The most popular of Haydn's early symphonies are *No's 6–8*, the trilogy of 'Le Matin', 'Le Midi' and 'Le Soir'. These are the first works which Haydn composed after his appointment to Esterházy and they were reputedly inspired by Prince Paul Anton's fondness for Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. Haydn's writing is less consistently programmatic than the Vivaldi concertos, but he does make reference to Italian *cantato gravis* style and also takes the chance to flatter his new orchestra by including several solo episodes, notably for violin. I find the Roy Goodman disc of these symphonies the most enjoyable of his cycle so far, but my top recommendation would be Trevor Pinnock/The English Concert (Archiv), who bring an added touch of insouciance to their customary expertise on period instruments.

Pinnock and The English Concert are also my first choice for the *Sturm und Drang* symphonies; in fact, these are some of the finest performances of Haydn symphonies that I have heard. Tempos are pacy but never hurried and the small orchestral forces are deployed to stringing effect, both on the occasional ceremonial works from this period (such as *No's 38, 41, 48*) or

on the more typically passionate and brooding music of, say, No's 26, 39, 49 and 52. These six discs, covering 19 symphonies, have just been reissued as a box-set (Archiv) but are still available singly – all are highly recommended.

Derek Solomons/L'Estro Armonico pioneered the use of period instruments in this repertoire in the early 1980s and their performances are still among the best available. Unfortunately, Sony/CBS have scored an own-goal by reissuing on CD only two of the several volumes in their vaults. Still, these two volumes (seven and nine) comprise two-thirds of Solomons's survey of the *Sturm und Drang* symphonies, but the remaining volume (eight), which includes such quintessential examples of the style as *Symphonies* 26 and 52, has still not been reissued on CD. Nor, alas, have volumes ten and 11, which offer excellent versions of many symphonies in the 50s and 60s that, Dorati aside, are not otherwise available. To sample the Solomons approach, try the recent mid-price coupling of *Symphonies* 45/48 (CBS Masterworks). There's one other *Sturm und Drang* disc worth noting: *Symphonies* 26/52/53 played, on period instruments, by Sigiswald Kuijken/La Petite Band (Virgin Classics). No 26 'Lamentatione' is given a particularly dark, powerful reading here, and a further bonus is the inclusion of the little-recorded No 53 'L'Imperiale', another of Haydn's splendid festive pieces.

With the later symphonies, duplication of good performances becomes inescapable. For instance, Kuijken, still on period instruments but now with the *Orchestra Of The Age Of Enlightenment*, has recorded majestic versions of the Paris Symphonies (on two discs) and, back with La Petite Band, also offers very attractive performances of No's 90–91 (all Virgin Classics). However, the finest playing of Haydn symphonies on modern instruments is probably by Sir Colin Davis/Concertgebouw Orchestra (Philips), two of whose four available discs feature No's 82/83 and 91/92. Even the lovely, but relatively overlooked, No 80 is available on three different discs: by Sir Charles Mackerras/Australian Chamber Orchestra, *c/w* No 81 (Comifer); by Jane Glover/London Mozart Players, *c/w* No's 87/89 (ASV); and by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, *c/w* No's 22/63 – they also do a fine coupling of No's 45/81 (both DG).

The London Symphonies are among the most-recorded items in the Haydn canon, so the overlaps come thick and fast. All I can do here is list a few recommendations. On modern instruments, Davis/Concertgebouw are probably first choice again with their discs of No's 93/94/96 and 100/104, but Sir Georg Solti/LPO (Decca) are in scintillating form with No's 93/99 and 95/104 (though their earlier recordings of No's 96/101 and 102/103 are a tad too intense) and Claudio Abbado/COE (DG) offer bright, smart recordings of No's 93/101 and 96/*Sinfonia Concertante* (aka 105), though with playing times of 49 and 43 minutes respectively these very full-price discs are not very generously filled.

Nikolaus Harnoncourt brings his experience with period performance to bear on his recordings with the Concertgebouw Orchestra (Teldec), even when they are not using

period instruments. They're in gripping form with No's 94/95 and 98/99, though their other Haydn recordings tend to suffer from eccentricities, such as unduly brusque phrasing and raw sound textures. On period instruments, Hogwood/AAM (L'Oiseau Lyre) have superb versions of No's 94/96 and 100/104, though these are the 'chamber style' orchestral arrangements made by Haydn's UK promoter Salomon (and will not be part of the Hogwood complete set).

Turning finally to mid- and bargain-price labels, there are a handful of good buys (all on modern instruments). Sir Charles Grove/English Sinfonia provide spirited versions of No's 92/104 (Imp Classics); Karl Böhm/VPO are characteristically mellow on No's 88/89/92 (Privilege); and, perhaps best buy of all, Eugen Jochum/LPO offer a crisp, stylish pairing of two perennial favourites, No's 94 'The Surprise'/'101 'The Clock' (Gallia). George Szell/Cleveland Orchestra have both a single disc of No's 92/94/96 and a two-CD set of *The Early London Symphonies* (No's 93–98) (CBS Maestro); these are shrewd, finely-focussed interpretations but the threadbare sound quality is a drawback.

For once, the leading bargain-labels Naxos and Hungaroton White Label prove disappointing. On the latter, Vilmos Tátrai/Hungarian CO offer half a dozen discs of competent but rather characterless performances, while Barry Wordsworth/Capella Istropolitana on Naxos can be even more bland.

Symphonies: essential listening

Trevor Pinnock/The English Concert (Archiv): *Sturm und Drang Symphonies* (435 001–2)

Sigiswald Kuijken/Orchestra Of The Age Of Enlightenment (Virgin Classics): *Paris Symphonies* (No's 82–84, VC 7 90793–2, No's 85–87, VC 7 90844–2)

Sir Colin Davis/Concertgebouw Orchestra (Philips): *Symphonies* 91/92 (410 390–2); 93/94/96 (412 871–2); 100/104 (411 449–2).

b) String Quartets



DESPIITE PLAYING such a crucial role in his oeuvre, Haydn's string quartets are represented patchily on CD. The only complete set is by the Tátrai Quartet (Hungaroton), but there are two problems here: one is that back-catalogue supplies from Hungary are extremely erratic, so in practice most of their recordings are unavailable at any one time. The second is that the Tátrai's best recordings are their earlier ones, particularly their classic *op* 76, recorded in mono in 1966, while their latest releases lose some of the freshness and vigour. Still, if you want the complete six-quartet sets of Haydn's first masterpieces in the genre, *ops* 20 and 33, or such fascinating transitional works as *ops* 9 and 17, then searching out the Tátrai discs is your only option.

continues on page 72

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talkin' that shit

They're young, they're fast, and they play marching music from New Orleans. Stuart Nicholson meets the men with a new agenda for brass. He also took their picture.

"WE'VE GOT to keep jazz music progressing instead of regressing. We've got to keep the young people interested. With disco music and rap music out there it's hard to get a wide audience. We've got to do all kinds of stuff, all kinds and types of music."

The words of a seasoned pro reviewing the current state of jazz? Or a crossover artist discussing his latest album? Hard to imagine, but these are the observations of a young musician who has not yet reached his 20s. Yet Phillip Frazier, co-leader and powerhouse tuba player of the Rebirth Brass Band, is a young man with a mission. The Rebirth is currently at the forefront of the burgeoning young brass band movement in New Orleans. Frazier is convinced that they, and bands like them, are on the verge of creating a whole new market for jazz.

"I think we're breaking through a lot," he says. "We still firmly believe the jazz market is small just now, but when we really break out the music is going to get more and more widespread."

IS HISTORY about to repeat itself? Is New Orleans, the fabled birthplace of jazz, about to sponsor its, well, rebirth, through its venerable brass band tradition? "Right now I know for a fact we're looking to a strong future," explained the tuba player. "On the *Fat Like Funkin' It Up* album, the track 'Do Wacha Wanna' became a popular hit in New Orleans. In fact it was played on the two major commercial stations in New Orleans, WYLD and WQUE, as well as the jazz stations. We were the first brass band to bring

jazz to a market alongside rap records." In fact the only other local band to get such exposure has been the Neville Brothers, something that gives the Rebirth confidence it can bring its music to such markets as rap and hip-hop.

With their latest album *Rebirth Kickin' It Live* being marketed in the Soul Music racks in record stores, the Rebirth, originally formed in 1983, seems on course for the success its leader predicts. Recently they opened for a Grateful Dead concert and 18 months ago they were the featured band at the Republican Party Convention in New Orleans when they were presented to President Bush. But has their popularity meant cutting ties with the traditional New Orleans repertoire? "I think we do more traditional music than many of the brass bands in New Orleans," asserts their co-leader.

Certainly *Kickin' It Live* includes numbers like "I've Found A New Baby", "Tin Roof Blues" and "Back O'Town Blues". But there's also new stuff. "We've got a number called 'Freedom'," explained Frazier, "which we dedicate to the freedom of Nelson Mandela and the struggle in South Africa, 'Grazin' In The Grass' inspired by Hugh Masekela and — though it's not a controversial song — a number called 'Talk That Shit'. The reason why it got that title is because we usually go perform at The New Orleans Saints football game. We were playing in the stands and our team was winning and the crowd started chanting that phrase, so we gave it an instrumental line and it's become a popular tune back home in New Orleans."

Rebirth were initially inspired by The Dirty Dozen Brass



Band, who led the way in making contemporary statements from within the brass band tradition of New Orleans. The Dozen's influence is clearly apparent on Rebirth's first album, *Here To Stay* (Arhoolie) recorded at The Grease Lounge, New Orleans in 1984. But by 1989 *Fal Like Funkin' It Up* (Rounder) showed a much looser approach and a willingness to take chances.

"The Dirty Dozen were doing it for everybody when we started off. They played all different types of music and as we heard them when we were coming up we kind of leaned towards their style. But now, since they've stayed with the swing-on stuff and straight-ahead stuff, it's our turn. Right now we're doing it for everybody, we're younger, more funky yet more traditional."

KEEPING IN touch with a young audience is important to the band. Frazier feels their youthful image helps young audiences relate to what they are doing. "We've got young guys in the group, they keep young ideas alive along with the band, they mix their young ideas along with our old ideas and it's kind of working out, we got a chemistry, a whole gumbo here. And since everybody likes different types of music that helps out with new ideas too." The nucleus of the band has remained unaltered since Phillip and his brother, Bass Drum Shorty, originally founded the group, along with trumpeter Kermit Ruffins, in their mother's front room in Noreth Villere.

"Just one or two faces have changed, but the band remains pretty young 'cos the youngest guy is 18 and the oldest guy is

29 years old – so we haven't got to the real old ages yet."

But it's the regular work from in and around New Orleans that keeps their music honest. That inexticable link and interaction with the social life of their community, in which they grew up and in which they now live, has helped shape their music, the music of the New Orleans streets, music to move and groove to. "It's all so spiritual, that feeling we get sometimes," says Frazier. "We might be at a parade and suddenly we're making up music on the spot. It's spiritual. We could never write it out, it changes all the time. The music's just part of us."

Spirited, youthful and enthusiastic, the Rebirth are a fun band. But it's serious fun; there's a refreshing clarity of purpose and an almost evangelical feeling when they perform. They want to reach out and touch their audiences with their sincerity. They want people to boogie and dance. They're putting jazz back on the dancefloor where it began and people are enjoying it. More than that, kids younger than the youngest band members are digging at it. It's not so much that Rebirth are writing a new agenda for jazz, it's just that they've returned to the old one.

REBIRTH BRASS BAND DISCOGRAPHY

Here To Stay Arhoolie 1092

Fal Like Funkin' It Up Rounder 2093

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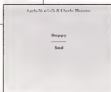


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LISTENING TO THE LION

Van Morrison is one of the great singers, with a career that spans almost three decades – from Them's "Here Comes The Night" to his new *Hymns To The Silence*. **Mike Fish** sets out to round-up the complete recordings of the Belfast Cowboy, a trail that takes him from teenage-angst R&B to the mellowest of musical mysticisms.

Take me way back take me way back take me way back . . .

ONE OF the glorious things about Van Morrison's work is that it's still *unfinished*. He has just released album number 20-something and the music seems unquenchable, the flow undiminished. It's not merely that Morrison is still able to churn out records. Anybody who's been in rock or jazz for long enough can sustain some kind of flow of product, useful or not. But the Irish singer's great heat and prodigious creativity don't seem to have stopped stretching and changing.

He is no longer the fearsome lion of *Astral Weeks*, admittedly, whose voice could stretch vowels into yawning shapes and create dizzying monologues from scraps of memory and yearnings that were somehow too strong to be settled with mere speech. There have been plenty of disappointing moments in his huge discography, and he is not an easy man to keep faith with. But the life in these rambling, cursed collected works is rare in an industry which now prizes neatness and good manners above searches for God and raging at the Celtic twilight. If Morrison has dissipated his talent over the past 15 years, as most detractors claim, then it's a fascinating, complex dispersal.

In a way, one can learn all the biography one needs to know about Morrison from his own records. The very latest, *Hymns To The Silence*, tells enough of his Belfast childhood in the monologues of "On Hyndford Street" and "See Me Through Part II" to conjure unshared memories of a pre-rock era (he was born in 1945) in a community where the young Morrison would tune in to Radio Luxembourg or "*Debussy on the Third Programme*". His graduation into skiffle and R&B bands led to the formation of the stringently tough beat group Them, whose two significant hits – "Gloria" and "Here Comes The Night" – have remained closely associated with Morrison. Barely out of his teens, the singer already had a shouting, unpredictable delivery – as black as any Belfast native would ever sound, yet still bound up in the traditional sweetness of Irish singing, almost as much in hock to John McCormack as to Bobby Bland and Ray Charles (listen to what he does with the traditional song closely associated with McCormack, "The Scar Of The County Down", on *Irish Heartbeat*).

Them's vigour was fated to lead them nowhere if Morrison left, and he did, at the instigation of American producer Bert Berns, who took the vocalist to the US in 1967.

The Early Years 1967
Astral Weeks 1968
Moodance 1970

THE TRACKS cut with Berns have been scattered across

various LP releases over the years, but this latest Columbia CD, though so far unissued in the UK, is the best representation. His American hit "Brown-Eyed Girl" is atypical of his next phase, since its simple bounce and effortless pop hook are as compressed as his subsequent music is relaxed. Yet it signifies, too, the grasp of melody and songcraft which has sustained his weakest moments. But the other stuff here is ill-focused: on the likes of "T B Sheets" he rambles on in a laggardly blues hangover, and the backings sound merely inconsequential.

Berns died in December 1967 and Morrison moved to Warner Brothers. He recorded *Astral Weeks* over a period of 48 hours, with the soft, shuffling accompaniment of a group that included Jay Berliner, Connie Kay and above all Richard Davis, whose bass lines – though scarcely any more adventurous than Davis's playing on any contemporary jazz session – act as both an anchor and a fluid agent. The record has accumulated so much adulation over the years that it's difficult to see or hear it clearly any more – which is probably right enough. The weakest moments on the record are the most conventional ones, the clippings of "Sweet Thing" and "The Way Young Lovers Do" where Morrison makes the music work in as his long, meditative, bewildered pieces, recitatives without clear sense or resolving rhyme. The 16 minutes of "Madame George" and "Ballerina" might as well have gone on much longer improvising his way through the lines, the singer sounds as intoxicated as the music wishes to be, his voice lolling or crying against the stipling of the flute and guitars and strings. Tam Buckley and Nick Drake would do much the same thing, but Morrison's streak of vituperation gave him an iron glint which those singers never quite mustered.

Still, *Astral Weeks* is – wait for it – probably *not that good*. Take away Morrison and the music would be mere frrippery: the Van of the later *Voodoo Floor* and *St Dominic's Preview* looks for similar ends and secures them more convincingly. *Moodance*, the record which followed Morrison's first breakthrough, is better, too. The problem with *Astral Weeks* is its lack of formal control, its sometimes-messy drift: you can tell it was recorded quickly, spirit-in-the-ether or no. *Moodance* adds shape, grip and harmony to the outpourings, without losing Van's mystical twists: in the first song he gets stoned by standing in a mountain stream, in the fourth he finds a radio dial turning up his soul along with the music, and the next one is actually called "Into The Mystic". It's a record of joyful sound. Nobody who hears the opening of "Moodance" itself will ever forget it, a jazz pulse slacked perfectly into a lovely



puen to a midnight tryst, and while Morrison denies himself the open spaces of the previous session, he gets the lyrical R&B grain of his voice to work on words and melodies that are as insightful as any songwriter of that day (1970) could create.

His Band And The Street Choir 1970

Tupelo Honey 1971

Saint Dominic's Preview 1972

EVERYBODY KNOWS – or at least has heard of – *Astral Weeks* and *Moodswings*. But the next three records, which show at worst only a slight lessening of Morrison's powers, might be almost forgotten today, given the waywardness of the artist's commercial standing. *His Band* emerged not long after *Moodswings*, and continues in the vein of short, punchy tunes which the opening "Dominn" – dedicated to the spirit of Fats, even if only in the most allusive/elusive way – exemplifies (and it earned him a US TopTen hit). Morrison's group construct a gypsyish R&B that isn't quite folk or rock or swing, but swings and rocks. In comparison, *Tupelo Honey* finds him becalmed if not quite beached. The record has verve but comparatively little of the grit of the last two, perhaps in part because Ted Templeman's production has a bounce which hitherto eluded Morrison himself. "Old Old Woodstock", "Strutting A New Life" and "I Wanna Roo You" find rural bliss in settings which otherwise follow urban radio routes, thanks to the cast of Californians who perform the music.

After such an upbeat record, the crackle and bite of *Saint Dominic's Preview* is almost shocking. It opens with "Jackie Wilson Said", putting faith in the timelessness of R&B wisdom, but the bitter words in the title track and the vocal tour de force of "Listen To The Lion" – where Morrison outdoes anything on *Astral Weeks*, giving up on his words and slurring and roaring through a passage of pure vocalese – offer the true tenor of the record.

Hard Nose The Highway 1971

It's Too Late To Stop Now 1974

Veodon Fleece 1974

UNIVERSALLY DISLIKED, *Hard Nose The Highway* isn't quite the dissaster it's usually painted. Nothing much may happen on the record, but in at least "The Great Deception" and "Snow In Anselmo" Morrison pushes his muse into a pop-rock hybrid which has its own charm or intensity. But if he really was seeking a bridge between himself and a larger audience, it could hardly have asked for a better manifestation than one of the great live records in rock'n'roll, *It's Too Late To Stop Now*. He revitalises lesser music such as "Warm Love", makes "Domino" into an even more vigorous celebration, upbraids "Gloria" and "Here Comes The Night" without mocking them and tips his rovers' bar to five inspirations in turn: Muddy Waters, Sam Cooke, John Lee Hooker, Ray Charles and Sonny Boy Williamson. Reflecting on what an awkward, bashful live performer Morrison would

become – trying to hide his bulk behind microphone stands, hurrying off the stage within seconds of a final note – the unaffected guts and determination here are astounding.

Veodon Fleece is far less compelling, but in its elusive refrains and haunting, throwaway moments, it's scarcely a lesser record. Again, the playing assumes a finer point than it did on *Astral Weeks* even while aspiring to the same drowsy haze of romantic afterglow. Listen also to the superb use of strings on "Linden Arden" and "Streets Or Arklow" And "You Don't Pull Your Punches But You Don't Push The River" even surpasses its title.

A Period Of Transition 1977

Wavelength 1978

Into The Music 1979

A *PERIOD* Of Transition is one of the more celebrated non-events in rock, a comeback after a three year lay-off (three years – today that's the *normal* length of time between major albums). Aside from "The Eternal Kansas City", though, the record sounds listless – and even Morrison himself sounds, listless on that song. *Wavelength* was, on the face of it, the muse recaptured, but there's an artificial brightness and spirit; instead of the genuine involvement which makes Morrison compelling even at his weariest. "Kingdom Hall", for instance, should have been ecstatic, yet is merely energetic. But the following *Into The Music* is weary, ecstatic, spirited and more, Morrison's real return to form. "Bright Side Of The Road" is one of the simplest invitations to walk on the sunny side of the street one could imagine, and coming from Morrison – hitherto only content with hard-won pleasures – it seems like blessed relief. But the real grandeur of the record lies in the first three songs of side two: "Angelou", the return to speaking in tongues in "And The Healing Has Begun" and the astonishing cover version of "It's All In The Game", where the chords are revoiced, the setting is like a requiem, and the singer, sounding baffled by his own tenderness, carries through a sublime revision.

Common One 1980

Beautiful Vision 1982

THERE ARE some surprising contrasts in Morrison's discography, but these two records are real chalk and cheese. *Common One* winds down the quieter moments of the previous record into a music that sometimes barely gets above a crawl. A key collaborator on both sets is Mark Isham, who not only blows thinking muso's trumpet but also introduces the profanity of synthesizers into Morrison's music and manages to make them work. If a 'Celtic soul' sensibility had always percolated through Van's muse, it breaks into the open around this point. Electronics assume a mystical shimmer, while around him the vocalist ponders on Wordsworth, Coleridge, Joyce and other fellow men of letters. "Summertime In England" and "When Heart Is Open" run for 30 minutes

Van Morrison

between them, and they're not sustained. But there are points when Morrison sounds on the verge of a place where it works out. *Beautiful Vision*, though, is so much more convincing in its briefer songs and sturdier conceptions. "Cleaning Windows" is one of his finest reminiscences, of a time when he would go home at lunchtime just to listen to Jimmy Rodgers, and the band rocks, even if Mark Knopfler's presence does put them in a Dire Straits groove. This time, for almost the whole record – the gloomy instrumental farewell of "Scandinavia" is an odd exception – being a visionary seems to mean having fun and reveling in grace and glorying in someone "who gives me religion"

Inarticulate Speech Of The Heart 1963
A Sense Of Wonder 1965
Live At The Grand Opera House Belfast 1985
No Guru, No Method, No Teacher 1985

AS THE 80s progressed, it was obvious that for all his sullen reticence when it came to public pronouncements, Van Morrison couldn't stop making records. His interest in Scientology spurs some of his musings on *Inarticulate Speech Of The Heart*, but as usual with Morrison he discovers ways to break out of somebody's dogma with the turnings of his own heart, inarticulate or no. The key sequence on what is a lilting set of tunes is in "Celtic Swing", where he puffs the vaguest of sax solos, and the following "Rave On, John Donne", where that poet and William Butler Yeats keep him company. *A Sense Of Wonder* is less interesting, arguably his weakest set of the 80s: I love the idea of a tune called "Tore Down A La Rumbaud", but the merely plausible reality of it is less intriguing, and the instrumentals take up no slack at all. The live record offers a reprise of some of the pick of the last few records, and works well enough on those terms, but it's no match for the incomparable *It's Too Late To Stop Now*. The title of the next one was aimed at everyone who complained at Van's getting of religion, writing a song for it called "Here Comes The Knight" might go on to suggest a comedy record. Instead, it's sombre, well-crafted, a little dull, often deceptively settled. Listen to the lyric of the ominous "Thanks For The Information" or the wattering "Ivory Tower". The strange sourness of it is made stranger by musical refinements that a young Van would have been bemused by

Poetic Champions Compose 1987
Irish Heartbeat 1988
Avalon Sunset 1989
Enlightenment 1990

THE MOST registered complaint about Morrison's later music concerns his singing: the unchained wildness throttled by age into a congested, slobbish instrument. The other one is that his songs have become pieces of a sky with nothing more interesting on it than some old Celtic stonies. Yet *Poetic Champions Compose* opens perhaps the best sequence of records

in Morrison's long career. Melodic fills pad out songs which might lack epic stature, but that's because Morrison wants smaller returns, not grand epiphanies, from moment to moment. "Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child" might be as great as any of his great vocal performances, and in pop byways such as "Queen Of The Slipstream" or "Give Me My Rapture" he sounds as ready to give this material his all as he did on "Domino" or "Jackie Wilson Said".

Admittedly, the meeting with The Chieftans on *Irish Heartbeat* isn't anything much. Van hardly needs Gaelic credibility, he not only sounds more Irish than the rest of them, he looks at on the sleeve, in his overcoat and fingerless mittens. *Avalon Sunset*, though, was Morrison's most rounded and intently beautiful record for years. He restored Cliff Richard's standing with "Whenever God Shines His Light On Me", and turned a writer's block to advantage with "I'd Love To Write Another Song". But it's his recitation, "Coney Island", and the following "I'm Tired Joey Boy", which showed how Van could use nostalgia to help him transcend his own cosmic weariness, 20 albums into a career that had lost all aspirational curve and now settled for whatever he could find and sing. *Enlightenment* was more of the same, at a slightly lower voltage

Hymns To The Silence 1991

AND SO to the biggest, longest, most comprehensive album of his career. The 21 songs on this double-LP/single CD run through all of his favourite themes: people bothering him about his work ("Why Must I Always Explain?"), rustic-fairy simplicity ("Village Idiot", "Ordinary Life"), standing on the threshold of the great beyond ("By His Grace"), a long-ago childhood ("On Hyndford Street"). There are gospel covers, and a tribute to his beloved Ray Charles in "I Can't Stop Loving You". There's nothing that he hasn't done before, yet every track is different from each other, and the arrangements and dynamics are richly diverse. Listen to the beautiful synth part for "Professional Jealousy", the engaging jazzbo shuffle of "So Complicated", the intoxicating repetitions of "Take Me Back". His musicians play with unforced elegance, rare spontaneity; it sounds invented in the studio, yet polished by a lifetime's hands-on experience.

Whether singing or speaking, Van's own voice is chorus and first actor. This is his rap on "See Me Through Part II", "See me through days of wine and roses – By and by when the morning comes – Jazz and blues and folk, poetry and jazz – Voice and music, music and no music – Silence and then voice – Music and writing, words – Memories, memories, way back – Take me way back, Hyndford Street and Hank Williams – Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet on Sunday afternoons in winter – Sidney Bechet, Sunday afternoons in winter! – And the tuning in of stations in Europe on the wireless – Before, yes, before this was the way it was – More silence, more breathing together – Not rushing, being – Before rock n'roll, before television – Previous previous, previous! – See me through! Just a closer walk with thee!"

I think that probably says it all. *

THE AXEMAN COMETH . . .

David Bowie's latest group Tin Machine shares one thing in common with all his previous groups – at the core is a

great lead guitar sound. Phil McNeill talks to Bowie and his new axe man Reeves Gabrels about groups, growing and the history of hard rock guitar. Photo of Reeves by Mel Yates.

DAVID BOWIE has worked with some great guitar players: Mick Ronson, Robert Fripp, Nile Rodgers, Carlos Alomar, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Adrian Belew, Reeves Gabrels . . .

Reeves who? You might well ask. Reeves Gabrels is the first guitar player to work with Bowie as an equal. When he first heard Gabrels, Bowie remembered a promise he'd made to Hunt and Tony Sales – the awesome rhythm section on Iggy Pop's *Last For Life* – that one day they'd work together again, if the right guitarist came along. Gabrels was the right guitarist.

They met through Gabrels's wife Sara, the press officer on Bowie's Glass Spider tour, who gave Bowie a tape of Rubber Rodeo, the band Gabrels played with in Boston, Massachusetts. Some months later, Bowie rang. "He said, 'I've listened to the tape and I think you're the guitar player I've been looking for.'"

As soon as the Sales brothers came over from LA, it became apparent that this wasn't just another Bowie project, but the start of a group. "I met them on a Friday afternoon," Reeves recalls, "and on Saturday we cut 'Heaven's In Here', the first track on the *Tin Machine* album. You can hear there's this dogfight going on, a very muscular jam. I still didn't know which was Hunt and which was Tony, but we were locked into this really intimate confrontation. At the end of it, we all went. Wow! This is great!"

As well they might. "Heaven's In Here" is all Gabrels says it is and more: very reminiscent of "Cracked Actor" from *Aladdin*



Tin Machine

Sane, it's a clenched-fist hammer of a groove in the velvet glove of a gorgeous Bowie melody. But unlike "Cracked Actor", it has an internal dialogue, which develops into the kind of wild, improvisational duel that once underpinned many of the best rock bands – Who, Hendrix, Cream, Dead. Remember when rock musicians used to listen to each other while they played? When sometimes they'd start a song and wouldn't know where it might take them? Listening to "Heaven's In Here", it's obvious that Tin Machine are four musical equals: a group.

SOME PEOPLE can't forgive Bowie for joining a group – but then, plenty of people couldn't forgive him for playing Live Aid, or making that old crocks' charity record with Mick Jagger, touring with a gigantic spider on the stage, going AOR, associating with Julien Temple and Steve Strange... Whatever David Bowie does, for people of a certain age he's a prisoner of their teenage dreams – he will never live up to their memories.

Hopefully, David Bowie doesn't care. He's making some of the best music of his life, and if his old fans can't come to his new group with an open mind, that's their loss. David Bowie now fronts a power trio. Good for him.

"I'm a guitar fan," says the Tin Machine singer. "All the guys I've worked with, I think they're all wonderful in their own way. Stevie Ray Vaughan was blues personified. Adrian's style was really loony. Frapp had some extraordinarily innovative ideas... But Reeves does it all.

"His approach to music is all-encompassing. He feels very much the way I do, that there isn't any aspect of music that can't be an influence on another kind of music – you've got a whole world to choose from. We're like mind-readers – you're OK, how am I?"

Bowie laughs and the rest of Tin Machine, sitting around a sunlit hotel lounge in Kensington, join in. They make an imposing team. Bass player Tony, dark and chiselled, listens with quiet intensity. His elder brother Hunt, detached from our little group, could be a retired light-heavyweight – his face has Brandoesque weight, his body the physical presence of a Brian Dennehey. Like Charles Watts, middle age suits him.

These men are mature adults, as of course is Bowie. Now 44, he has long been at ease with his age: his light suit is a picture of elegance. The youngest member of Tin Machine, Reeves Gabrels, 35, who has spent the previous two hours talking to *Tle Wire*, likens Tin Machine's maturity to "the thing Keith Richard said about wanting to see the form grow, the same way blues and jazz players have been able to continue being innovative at 50 years old.

"I think in a way we're almost a new breed. All four of us have been through divorces and we've all had bad drug habits. We've all lost lots of friends over the years. We've lived through the down side of life, and if your music is honest and cathartic, it has to deal with your emotions and your problems."

Another benefit Gabrels sees from their age is experience. "We have a sort of encyclopedic overview of musical styles," he

says quietly, with no hint of boasting. Hunt had his own horn band, The Hunt Sales Big Nine – he was the singer. They were a cross between Wayne Cochran & The CC Riders, James Brown and Sammy Davis Jr. David listens to a lot of classical music. I listen to country music, rockabilly, doo-wop, Duke Ellington – Cootie Williams and Cat Anderson, the trumpeter players, do some amazing things..."

The other point about Tin Machine as a group is that, as groups do, they are now growing together.

"The first record was very outward-looking," Reeves goes on, "because that's the best way to unify a unit, by saying: that sucks." Thus "Crack City", reminiscent musically of Hendrix's "Wild Thing", was addressed to drug dealers, while "Under The God", a siren-strafed power rocker out of the Iggy Pop/Billy Idol/Steve Stevens songbook, vent its spleen at America's white supremacists.

But although *Tin Machine* was outward-looking in subject matter, it actually required Bowie to reveal himself more directly than usual as a singer and as a writer. Traditionally, he has used his musicians' performances as a setting, a component of his work that was subversive to the concept. Ronson's power chords, Vaughan's blues, Rodgers' funk, the jazz piano of Mike Garson – these elements were Bowie's tools. But with Tin Machine, the playing *is* the concept.

Bowie is *not acting* at being in a group, the way he acted out Ziggy. *Aladdin Sane*. "Heroes". *Young Americans*. The difference between *Diamond Dogs* and *Tin Machine* is that where one revelled in the apocalypse, the other revels in it. It may not be chic, but it is honest, and it requires that the songs come from the heart as much as the mind.

Tin Machine was released in 1989. Two years later, Reeves sees a big development in the newly-released *Tin Machine II*, and links it to the group's internal chemistry. "It's a more inward-looking record," he says, "because we've spent time together. We're friends. We're almost entering an area that – it's a little clichéd – one would see as a woman's domain, gathering and having coffee and talking about stuff, whereas men drink beer and watch football."

I SUGGEST to Reeves that the concept of Tin Machine was to investigate what might have followed Hendrix and Cream if heavy metal had never happened. "Heavy metal and fusion," he quickly corrects, "though I think we were a little light on concept. For Hunt and I there's a John Coltrane element, then David brought in a live bootleg of Led Zeppelin, he had Cream, Hendrix, Glenn Branca, Sonic Youth, a lot of early 20th Century Russian classical stuff..."

"What I liked in Glenn Branca and Sonic Youth was the visceral energy and density of the guitar structures. What I missed was the lack of any classic melody, and that's David's strong point.

"Vernon (Reid, of Living Colour) and I have talked about this. He says the guitarist should shake hands with the song. The thing with Cream and Hendrix was that the sound of the guitar was appropriate and distinctive to each song. The guitar



sound was an element in the songwriting, and that's what we're trying to do."

If Vernon Reid understands this, it has to be said that he is not very good at it: like most modern rock bands who are trying to do something interesting, Living Colour seem to have no idea about melody and clarity. But then, no one has ever matched Hendrix as a composer of four-minute performances – in some ways, it's an art that died when rock became split into easily-assimilated little boxes. There is a fine irony in David Bowie, whose *Ziggy* showmanship was as much a factor in taking the music out of rock as Deep Purple's lowest common denominator approach, now riding to the rescue of what he helped to kill off.

As Gabrels points out, the Sales brothers have an important part in this: "Hunt studied with Buddy Rich and met his favourite drummers, like Gene Krupa, through their father, Soupy Sales – he was a famous comedian, a sort of Tommy Cooper. Tony's big on James Jamerson (Motown's classic bass player) and he's a very guitaristic bass player. So they have the same influences as Noel Redd." ¹ Mitch Mitchell (of The Jimi Hendrix Experience), Ron Wood and Micky Waller (of The Jeff Beck Group), Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker (of Cream) – and they're drawing from those guys as well.

"Much of what we do is free-form – it's remarkable how many sections of songs have no specific length. Hunt and I never talk about it, but we are constantly changing the feel in the solo sections – duet sections! – very much like Hendrix and Mitchell."

Bowie compares the way Tin Machine set out to rediscover or reinvent guitar rock with his work with Eno on *Heroes*:

"The idea of search and destroy was a priority, breaking with the traditional use of the instrument. With us (Bowie and Eno) it was synthesizers – buying or borrowing one and then throwing the manual away. That's rule one. But also, half the things we thought were really exciting were accidental. Often we'd be playing through a piece of music on the first run and there was a mistake in it, and if the mistake was interesting enough we'd build on it and make an arrangement out of it. That's something we do in Tin Machine."

Gabrels puts great emphasis on how he uses every facet of his instrument. "There's a whole micro-universe of sounds you can get with just an amp, a fuzzbox and a guitar. Hendrix explored it, but then it got dropped – I guess at that point in time, as soon as you did it people just said, Oh, he's doing the Hendrix thing."

Gabrels himself is a prime example of the modern school of guitarists who have actually, well, been to school. At Berkeley College of Music in Boston he studied under jazz cats Gary Burton, Pat Metheny, Bob Moses and Phil Goodrich. Others who went to the same school include metal master Steve Vai, who has played with PrL, David Lee Roth and Whitesnake, fusionist Al DaMeola, jazzier John Scofield, and Alice Cooper's guitarist Al Pulareri.

The problem with that kind of school, says Gabrels, is that "you can teach technique, but you can't teach soul. As Les Paul said to Pat Martino – yeah, you're first . . . but can your mother recognise you on the radio?" To Gabrels, this obvious fact came, he admits, as a shock: "It was like the lightbulb suddenly went on. I thought, you idiot!"

A further breakthrough came when he saw Adrian Belew

exploring the sonic possibilities of feedback and distortion with Talking Heads. And then there was Steve Stevens, whose work with Billy Idol was a revelation not only for Gabrels, but for many other highly-skilled guitarists who had previously looked down on rock. "Rebel Yell" certainly shook things up for guitar players in the States," he says. "Steve Stevens was someone who obviously had chops, playing a form of music one thought of as being more primitive from a technique point of view. If you look at a lot of the metal that's out there now, it's just pretty reread fusion – Al DiMeola riffs with straighter time.

There's also a connection between Steve Stevens and Eddie Van Halen and Steve Vai and Vernon Reid and Doug Boyle who plays in Robert Plant's band and Nuno Bettencourt of Extreme and Reb Beach who plays in Winger – and the big connecting point for all of us is Allan Holdsworth (the British fusion pioneer). I hear his licks all the time in those guys, the legato stuff, the chromatic thing. I don't know if everybody talks about it, but it's pretty obvious."

It's pretty obvious too that Gabrels is relishing his unlearn-

ing process. "The neat thing about David's playing," he says, "is that he's not a schooled guitar player. He comes up with some things that I wouldn't think of in a million years."

David Bowie would love to be a great guitarist, but if he can't have that, he now has the next best thing: a quite brilliantly accomplished guitar player who is completely open to ideas. *Tin Machine II* may lack a little of the "savageness" which Gabrels says the Sales brothers brought to *Tin Machine*, but it is a more subtle album, crammed with sublime guitar performances which Hendrix the composer would be proud of. "You Can't Talk", for instance, has about seven separate superb guitar parts – some strummed, some with fuzz, some with wah wah, at least one backwards, and all very Hendrix – yet the whole thing has a composed clarity that only Idol and Stevens have journeyed into mainstream rock in recent years.

Bowie's achievement into classic hard rock has only just begun. don't let small-minded critics stop you going along for the ride. In the unlikely event that they do manage to kill the man and make him break up the band, Reeves Gabrels has a ready-made epitaph. "Boy, could he play guitar . . ."

David Bowie's guitarists (in chronological order)

David Bowie

Played all guitar on *Diamond Dogs* and some guitar on most other Bowie albums. Plays rhythm guitar on most Tin Machine tracks, which are usually written on guitar.

Bowie: "On *Diamond Dogs* I was after a kind of a sound and I couldn't find anybody that would do what I wanted. It took me hours to get the notes right, but I more or less got it. I always wanted to be a guitar player – I'll do it again one day, when Reeves isn't around. I can't play if there's anybody else in the room. I can't paint if anybody's around – I'm a Capricorn. I've got to be able to do it well before I do it in public." Gabrels: "I enjoy David's playing. He makes me realise how locked-in I get."

Mick Ronson

Lead guitar on *David Bowie* (1969, one track), *The Man Who Sold The World* (1971), *Hunky Dory* (1971), *The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars* (1972), *Aladdin Sane* (1973) and *Pin-Ups* (1973).

Reeves: "My mother bought me *Ziggy Stardust* when I had my first electric guitar, a Telecaster, and I saw a picture of Mick Ronson with a Gold Top Les Paul Deluxe – which to my knowledge he never used! – but he looked so cool that I sold my Telecaster and bought a Gold Top. A lot of Ronson's stuff was just a distillation of Jeff Beck's *Truth*, but there's some amazing playing on *Pin-Ups* and Lou Reed's *Transformer* and 'Moonage Daydream'. He had an expressive way of using the wah pedal on slow sweep that was a big influence on me." Bowie: "Ronson's entire vocabulary was based around Jeff Beck – I don't think I ever heard him listen to anyone else. Beck, like Clapton, was into all the old blues guitarists, but Ronson

had no time for all that."

Earl Slick

Played on *David Live* (1974), *Young Americans* (1975), *Station To Station* (1976). Performed on the Serious Moonlight tour (1983) when Stevie Ray Vaughan pulled out.

Reeves: "He was from Staten Island, where I grew up, and when I was 13 me and my friends used to sneak into the night school dances to see him play with this band called Mac Truck – his name was Frank Maeloni then. He was one of the first Staten Island guitarists who made the big move of getting on the ferry and going into Manhattan to find work. He was so cool he played a black Les Paul with a cigarette between his fingers."

Bowie: "When I started to work with Earl Slick I played him what I'd done on *Diamond Dogs* and said, 'I kinda want it to sound like this – but better! Earl, of any of the guitarists, was probably the most open. I'd tell him to use feedback at the beginning of 'Station To Station', and although he thought it was kind of odd to do that, or to use Chuck Berry riffs out of context, he loved it. He thought it was fun."

Carlos Alomar

Played mainly rhythm guitar on *Young Americans* (1975), *Station To Station* (1976), *Low* (1977), "Heroes" (1977), *Stage* (1978), *Lodger* (1979), *Snary Monsters (And Super Creeps)* (1980), *Tough* (1984) and *Never Let Me Down* (1987).

Reeves: "He's a great rhythm player. The combination of that funky rhythm playing and a rock thing like on *Station To Station*, where he and Earl Slick were working together, was

continues on page 69



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the charts Every month, a selection of current league ladders We always welcome your own playlists

Ten Reasons Why It's OK To Like Yes

1. Anthony Braxton once recorded for the same label as Anderson, Bruford, Wakeman and Howe.
2. Derek Bailey interviewed Steve Howe for his book on improvisation.
3. Bill Bruford employs young jazzers in Earthworks.
4. Tony Kaye only uses two keyboards on stage – and they appear to be identical.
5. Jon Anderson, Bill Bruford and Rick Wakeman are competent amateur cricketers.
6. Even Yes seem to have gone off *Tales From Topographic Oceans* (but we haven't).
7. ABWH's "I'm Alive" had to be lengthened for release as a single.
8. Jon Anderson has appeared on stage wearing trainers . . .
9. . . . and they weren't hi-tops.
10. There are no plans for a Buggles reunion tour.

Compiled by a bunch of yes-men.

Arnie Spilman's Playlist

1. **Crazy People Music** *Branford Marsalis* (CBS)
2. **No Caipira** *Egberto Gismonti* (EMI Odeon)
3. **Straight Ahead** *Barbara Dennerlein* (Enja)
4. **Third Soft Machine** (CBS)
5. **Before We Were Born** *Bill Friel* (Elektra Musician)
6. **The British Orchestra** *Gil Evans* (Mole)
7. **Word Of Mouth** *Jaco Pastorius* (Warner)
8. **Porgy And Bess** *Miles Davis* (CBS)
9. **Deceit** *Thi Heat* (Rough Trade)
10. **Things Ain't What They Used To Be** *McCoy Tyner* (Blue

Note) Chart supplied by Arnie Spilman of Darentry, Northants.

Ten Songs We'd Like To See Covered By Leon Redbone

1. **The Lancashire Toreador** *George Formby*
2. **My Cutey's Due At Two-To-Two Today** *Ted Worns*
3. **I'm A Bear In A Lady's Boudoir** *Cliff Edwards*
4. **The Blues Singer From Alabam'** *Evansatt Miller*
5. **Washing Dishes With My Sweetie** *Ted Worns*
6. **Lydia, The Tattooed Lady** *Graucho Marx*
7. **Never Let Your Braces Dangle** *Harry Champion*
8. **There's A Little Baby In The Moon** *G H Elliott*
9. **I'm A Cranky Old Yank In A Clanky Old Tank On
The Streets Of Yokohama With My Honolulu Mama
Doing Those Beat-O Beat-O Flat On My Seat-O
Hirohito Blues** *Hoagy Carmichael*
10. **Black Dog** *Lad Zepplin*

Compiled by Fred Karwo

Uncirculated Videos

1. **Parallel Realities Band** *Stuttgart 1990*
2. **Keith Jarrett Trio** *Juan-Les-Pins 1986*
3. **Miles Davis** *Rome 1982*
4. **Miles Davis** *Terna 1984*
5. **Joni Mitchell** *San Remo 1988*
6. **John Abercrombie Trio** *Italy 1984*
7. **Art Ensemble Of Chicago** *Warsaw 1982*
8. **Michel Petruccianni** *Pouper 1982*
9. **Pat Metheny Trio** *Juan-Les-Pins 1986*
10. **Joni Mitchell** *Santa Barbara 1979*

Courtesy of video collector of Leo Webster, Derby.



John Lee Hooker: Bob Lauby/ETI.com, Tim & Wire Winner

In this month's **Soundcheck**

■ Wire Winners

Wire critics pick the cream of the month's new releases. This month — Ran Blake, John Lee Hooker, Robbie Robertson, Alex Ward . . .

■ Soundcheck

Our regular A-Z review section. Other RPMs include Billy Bragg, Coleman Hawkins, Mozart, Nyman and Steve Williamson.

■ Fast Licks

A quickfire checklist of more new releases.

■ Outlines

Round-ups, record surveys, extended reviews. This month — music from Mali and classical pianist Dinu Lipatti.



wire winner: piano

RAN BLAKE

GIANFRANCO CASATI/ART CD



RAN BLAKE

That Certain Feeling
the ART CD6077 CD

If most of these improvisations repay the intensive listening that I have given them lately it is partly because Gershwin's melodies and harmonisations are so strong as to retain their identity and significance even when subject to the drastic distortions – expansion, condensation etc – which they undergo here. As so often with Blake, it is chiefly a matter of condensation, of a lot of meaning(s) being packed into short time-lengths. As an example try the varied nuances of touch and timing, of colour and texture, in "It Ain't Necessarily So".

All the material is Gershwin's aside from a freely improvised "Overture" of Blake's own, presented in two versions, the first of which has an oriental, or perhaps Jewish, feeling because of its choice of melodic intervals. More striking are the differences between two accounts, short and longer, of the eponymous "That Certain Feeling". The latter is in places just a bit Weberian (eg the Piano Variations Op 27) with its harshly accented and isolated notes. Indeed these three minutes and 24 seconds are interestingly organised, with (to simplify) deep bass chords murmuring in the distance, more sharply defined ideas close up, and others in the middle distance.

To Blake's piano are on some pieces added Steve Lacy's soprano or Ricky Ford's tenor saxophone, in two cases both. The more turbulent of these is "Strike Up The Band", with a real duet from the saxophonists and

the leader concentrating on the fracturing of various accompanimental figures. This performance raises, as does "S Wonderful", questions about the piano's true role in relation to the sort of improvisation Lacy and Ford do here. Of course, the former has made a number of completely solo recordings, and he and the tenor saxophonist sound remarkably self-sufficient. Possibly this prompted "Someone To Watch Over Me", on which the Blake bloke takes a powder.

Repeatedly the pianist distills the essence of Gershwin's thoughts, however, suggesting him to be closer to the spirit of jazz than we tend to assume. Nowhere is this more so than in "But Not For Me", although it is here that he departs farthest from the letter of the composer's music. Still, the original song remains firmly in place behind the dissonant abstractions, serving as a reminder of the extraordinary transformation music can undergo. A simple instance here is the way that "What Do You Want With Bess?" changes into "I Loves You, Pogy", but more notable are the oblique allusions to other Gershwin pieces that occur in these performances. And not only to him, for T W Rollins's "Oleo" finds its way into "I Got Rhythm", done as a duet with Ford.

The one called "Blues" proves to derive from the *Andante ma con ritmo deciso* selection of "An American in Paris", and Blake could have made more of this. But scarcely of "Mine". In *Let 'em Eat Cake* Gershwin has two very different melodies going simultaneously here, and piano and tenor saxophone evoke this in a diversity of subtle ways

MAX HARRISON

wire winner: blues

JOHN LEE HOOKER



Mr Lucky

Silvermaster ORE 519 CD/MCLP

THE ESSENCE of Hooker's music has hardly changed in over 40 years and, like they say in the USA, if it ain't bust don't fix it. Hooker/blues is more than just ain't bust, it's close to perfect. The relentless beat, solid but not solid, the insistent guitar figures, the dark growling voice, the disregard for clas-

sical structure, they all come together in a monolithically clear, deceptively simple and inimitable style.

This is not to say that he has never sought to broaden, if not develop, his music, and long before *The Howler* he had recorded with various artists, great and small. One of my favourite examples has always been his session with Tony McPhee and the Groundhogs, which included a marvellous cut of "I Cover The Waterfront". On *Mr Lucky* he is joined on a massively different but stunning version of the same theme by Van The Man and Booker T Jones. In atmosphere and arrangement it has been transformed into a typical Morrison soul-exposing epic, but it fits Hooker like one of those sharp suits he wears.

The least typically Hookeresque track is "Stripped Me Naked", one of two songs with Carlos Santana, where there's some stadium rock drumming and where the screaming, flamboyant guitar lines leap far from the master's basic licks. Keith Richard sits in for the roughest, most primitive number, John Lee's old war-serpent "I'm A Crawlin' Kingsnake", with the production evoking the bossy acoustic of earlier recordings. Other tracks, like "Susie" with Johnny Winter, bolt pieces from the basic blues meccano outfit into familiar yet still intriguing constructs.

Other guests on this album are Johnnie Johnson, Robert Cray, Albert Collins, Ry Cooder and John Hammond "Backbiters And Syndicators" opens with Collins ripping out stinging phrases like they were hot far to be shaken off his fingers. Hooker evidently has no qualms about stretching his lean and mean string-plucking alongside the work of the most virtuosic guitar stars. At the end of the title track he tells Cray "thank you, Robert, I feel a little better" and so he should. There's not a clinker in the whole album, and although "This Is Hip" with Ry Cooder is a lightweight piece it serves as a breather between the corrosive Collins and the brooding power of "Waterfront".

Hooker near-enough reviewed *Mr Lucky* himself when he told Phil McNeill (*Wire* 89) "*The Howler* was a very good record, and we got this other good one coming." Modesty evidently foisted. It's better than that, when Hooker is good he is very, very good, but when he is *bad* he is brilliant.

BARRY WETHERDEN



wire winner: improv



STEVE NOBLE & ALEX WARD

Ya Boo, Red and Rumble
Inca CD06 CD

I'VE BEEN looking forward to this release for quite a while. I first heard Ward during Company Week 1988 and was very favourably impressed. What struck me was not his technical precocity – that's common enough these days – but the maturity and inventiveness of his improvising. *Ya Boo, Red and Rumble* amply fulfils the promise of those concerts. Right from the first moments of the opening track, "8th And How", Ward confirms his command both of instrumental technique and of the free music idiom, and he never flags as he gives both clarinet and alto sax a thorough workout. His influences range from Olivier Messiaen (he won a prize in his early teens for a performance of the clarinet part in Messiaen's *Quatuor Pour La Fin Du Temps*) to Frank Zappa, and these are reflected in deadpan wit (which Company director Derek Bailey no doubt fostered) and the use of intermingling, power-blocks of sound.

I'm not forgetting that this is a duo album. Batman is impressive, too. Noble's wry humour and unerring choice of varied patterns, textures, objects to hit and things therewith to thwack them contributes massively to the success of the record. He matches Ward point for point in agile thought, and the two of them interact superbly.

This is a splendid issue, with no padding or marking time anywhere during the programme's 56 minutes. Ward was 15 when he

began this album (the first three tracks date from March 1989, the rest from July 1990) and it is intriguing to speculate on what he will achieve with a few more years of experience under his belt. **BARRY WETHERDEN**

wire winner: rock



ROBBIE ROBERTSON

Storyville
Geffen GEFD 24905 CD/MC/LP

ROBBIE ROBERTSON'S eponymous debut solo album was released in 1987, after almost a decade of silence following The Band's demise. The songs on that album offered a more introspective vision than previously, with a smoother texture and fuller sound to make up for Robertson's rather limited voice, and at first hearing *Storyville* sounds like a pale copy, lacking in comparable emotional and musical range.

But this is not a first hearing album. The overall sound – warm, seductive, almost conversational – draws you in, and once you're hooked the sense of sameness gradually fades. The excellence of the production helps – it all *sounds* so beautiful.

Robertson's original claims to fame were as a guitarist and writer. At first there seems too little guitar on *Storyville*, and the penchant for extremely high-pitched solos slightly irritating, but there are immediate compensations – the carewheeling solo on the opening "Night Parade" could hardly be anyone else's – and other delights ease their way into the foreground with each listening.

The lyrics are interesting throughout, witty and ironic, finding hope in the ordinariness. "Make a break for the outside world – and they

won't let you in", he observes wryly on "Resurrection". Or on "Scapbox Preacher", the song that most evokes the spirit of The Band – "he tipped his hat just like Don Quixote, and said 'don't let the rapture pass you by'."

The songs are underpinned by breathtaking percussion work from Alex Acuna, memory-jerking organ from Garth Hudson, excellent playing from several bassists, and universally superb arrangements. On several tracks Aaron Neville and Neil Young add tonal colouring to Robertson's voice. Every song seems to have been assembled like a perfect musical jigsaw.

This is the best rock record I've heard this year. And if the fact that it comes from a 47-year-old veteran says something about the paucity of new talent emerging, it also illustrates rock music's escape from the fetters of youth culture. When all is said and done an album like *Storyville* reverberates with the sort of musicality you can only generate from 30 years of mingling craft and art, of listening and playing.

DAVID DOWNING

KENNY BARRON

The Only One
Rerecord BSR CD 315 CD

KENNY BARRON QUINTET

Quickstep
Epic 60812 CD/LP

DURING THE middle of the last decade, respected journals such as the *New York Times* and *Village Voice* insisted Sphere was one of the finest small groups in jazz. Part of the reason lay in the crystalline brilliance of Kenny Barron's piano playing. If the quartet's records were largely unnoticed this side of the Atlantic, they were certainly not missed in musicians' circles in New York. Barron's career received a considerable fillip and by early 1990 the city's jazz nightlife guide *Hot House* was able to name him "New York's Most Active Pianist".

In fact, Barron's equivocal position in jazz prior to his work with Sphere highlights a situation not uncommon in jazz. It is simply that by the time an artist reaches artistic maturity, he runs the risk of being regarded as *passé* by critics and public alike. Jazz audiences, after all, have either been fed an





unrelenting diet of shocks announcing the new or been mesmerised by the hosannas celebrating the youngest new instrumental virtuoso. In such a climate the craftsman quietly perfecting his skills is hardly a sensation, jazz, in wooing the future, has been notorious in overlooking the present. These albums suggest that Kenny Barron might yet garner sufficient praise to at least bring him out of the shadows.

The Only One places Barron in a trio setting with former Sphere sideman Ben Riley on drums and Ray Drummond on bass. The title track is based on the main melodic motif of "Jersey Bounce" turned with Monkian dissonance. It illustrates immediately how Barron combines melodic logic and harmonic insight to create an improvised statement of greater weight and emotional force than the vehicle for improvisation. It's a gift he shares with Tommy Flanagan and Hank Jones, that of creating a complete statement that can stand on its own, where nothing can be added or taken away without upsetting its balance. Even on the rolling "Blueswatch" or the hackneyed show-tune "Surrey With The Fringe On Top" he works minor miracles of creative wisdom.

Quintet is Barron's third quartet album. Here the front line is Eddie Henderson on trumpet and John Stubblefield on tenor. It's his best quartet date yet; Victor Lewis on drums makes sure of that. There is a level of group empathy and quiet understanding that's projected by the mutually inspirational effect the players have on each other. Indeed, this might be the best Henderson and Stubblefield on record simply because they sustain a balance of technical fluency and melodic organisation that's surfaced less readily elsewhere. Barron, as accompanist and soloist, remains as unfussy as he is profound.

STUART NICHOLSON

BELA BARTOK

String Quartets 4 & 6, 44 Duos, volume 1
Virgin Classics VC 7 91389

It is only a few weeks since I was reviewing the Arditti's reading of Bartok's Fourth String Quartet (*Wax 89*) and it is pleasing to be able to welcome another worthwhile performance of the piece on this disc by the Endellion Quartet. I have had the Fine Arts

Quartet's recording of all six of Bartok's string quartets since I was at school (They cost me, new, £1.57, for three LPs. Those were the days when you could take out a subscription to *Jazz Monthly*, become a member of Klok's Kleeck, have a night out at Covent Garden, get a taxi home and still have change out of £500.) When a particular interpretation of favourite works has become so familiar it is often difficult to accept any departures from the innosation, phrasing and attack that have come to seem correct, but I'll have no difficulty living with these versions.

The Fourth (1928), with its clear, arch-like construction and its severe, exacting, inexorable transformation of the simple thematic material, was completed some 11 years before Bartok began the Sixth. He



started to write the latter in August 1959, when his mother's terminal illness was delaying his decision to move to the USA, and when the political situation in Europe, the cause of his intended emigration, was enough to depress anyone. Though stark, ironic, bleak and bitter, the Sixth demonstrates Bartok's total mastery of his 'craft or sullen art' and is a fitting culmination of his exploration of the string quartet idiom.

BARRY WITHERDIN

ELVIN BISHOP

Don't Let The Bossman Get You Down
Alligator AFCD 1791 CD/MC/LP

THE RETURN of the blues party animal Elvin Bishop looks like Gene Wilder and special-

ises in the kind of gloopy blues you could imagine Wilder hollering. It's a long time since Bishop's magnificent 'solo' hit "Fooled Around And Fell In Love" (actually sung by Mickey Thomas, now of Scarslip), which breached the UK Top 40 and US Top 10 in 1976, and longer still since his halcyon days with Mike Bloomfield in The Butterfield Blues Band.

Bishop was only with Paul Butterfield three years – though, as with all 60s memories, it seems much longer – and it was on 1968's *In My Own Dream* that he unveiled his first great drinking blues, "Drunk Again". The style makes a welcome comeback in "My Whiskey Head Buddies", a very funny song in which Bishop gets stranded at the liquor store checkout by his shoplifting band members, recounted by Bishop in James Garner mode.

Bishop's speciality is re-creating the aura of a San Francisco bar band in the studio, and on superb jamming tracks like "Soul Food" his six-piece group sound convincingly like they're having a ball. But don't expect the kind of guitar fireworks that he used to spark with Bloomfield – though he shows his form in that department on "Come On In This House", with masterful shimmering slide (Bishop's preferred implement these days), and the bottleneck showcase "Devil's Stair".

If you want flashy blues guitar, there are a million others to choose from. But if you like to party, Elvin's your man. PHIL M. NEILL

BLUESIANA

Bluesiana II

Wichita Hill Jazz 0193 1 101 55-2 CD

THE FIRST album under the Bluesiana banner featured a trio with the late Art Blakey, pianist Dr John, and David "Fathead" Newman on saxophone, but the group has now expanded to a sextet, with the addition of Ray Anderson on trombone, drummer Will Calhoun, Joe Bonadio on percussion, and either Essiet Okon Essiet or Jay Leonhart on bass.

The combination of blues and Louisiana neatly defines the parameters, given that the latter includes jazz as well the mix of ethnic influences which permeate the region's history. As you would expect from a project with the good Doctor at its heart, the musi-

arrives soaked in a deep, funky rhythm and blues grooves and by and large stays there.

The jazz inflections introduced by Newman and Ray Anderson, however, add piquancy to an already spicy brew, but without deflecting the main thrust of the music, while drummer Will Calhoun reveals a greater empathy with jazz rhythms than would be deducible from his work with Living Colour, notably on the late-night, after-hours feel of "For Art's Sake", although his solo "Tribute To Art" doesn't have much of Blakey in it.

This is a group of highly capable players getting loose and having a good time, and in the process creating music which pushes out beyond the assumed boundaries of the form. Then again, since none of these guys have much time for boundaries in their own work, maybe that goes without saying.

KENNY MATTHESON

BILLY BRAGG

Don't Try This At Home

Got Discs 828 279-2 CD/MC/LP

MORE THAN a decade since The Jam drove him to leave the army, eight years since *Life's A Riot*, a year after he rewrote the words to "The Internationale" and sang "The Red Flag" to its first best tune, how hard is it being Billy these days?

Of course this is rock not folk — but anyone who's been to the backstage door aftermath of a Bragg-show and seen the intensity of his give-and-take relationship with his audience, knows what community debate really is. They love him, and they make demands — and he tries to deliver, to live up to a performer's promises. All those duets with Kirsty McColl only serve to remind you how much better he understands the Electric Pop process (with amp'd guitar) than her dad Ewan (pursue folkie, much integrity and little reach) ever really did.

Well, they're two of a kind. History appears to stream back past them, but on they trudge, lonely socialists, the sadder the older the better — with this release, Billy's more wide open than ever and also more precise, and less and less capable of prying the personal and the political from inside one another.

"I went out drinking with Thomas Paine/He

said all revolutions are not the same." There are presently only three great white British singers (male) — Chris Difford, Robert Smith and Billy — and only Billy is now consistently writing the songs that match his voice, these elegant intonations of a better world not quite round the corner after all. Utopias are only in our heads now. MARK SINKER

BILL BRUFORD'S EARTHWORKS

All Heaven Broke Loose

Edmore EGFEU 2105 CD/MC/LP

THIRD OUTING for Bruford's musicly, scampering outfit, with Django Bates on keys and the increasingly fetching E flat peck horn, Ian Ballamy on soprano, alto and



tenor saxes and Tim Harries on pretty lovely bass. While they're not exactly breaking new territory — if you've heard either of the previous two, you'll recognise this Anglophile fusion with whimsical asides at once — the record ups their quotient of polish and charm in some abundance.

The inconsistency of attack makes it a little hard to swallow as a single programme. Dirges mix with knockabout nuttiness, lyric melodies get jostled by mad-dog racing. To pick two diametrically opposite things which they do equally well, "Forget-Me-Nor" is a lovely bit of orchestration for Bates and Ballamy to take keening solos on, while "Nerve" is neurotic cool funk, done to an icy turn. It's a pity they follow that with "Splashing Out", which seems to be a dig in the ribs of ambient house: do this with any

kind of slackness in the execution and it's a disaster. This is a disaster.

Never mind. The title track is a discreet sort of epic which suggests that this band has a lot of good tunes in it yet. If there's an individual carp, it's the rather unfortunate one that Bill himself isn't always ideal. The more-or-less straight tune on "Hotel Splendour" sounds a bit stiff-wristed, and it makes you wonder how Bates and Ballamy would sound if it were Jeff Waits or Smitty Smith behind the traps. But he needs to be applauded for seeing this venture through. Album number four ought to clench it for good and all.

MIKE FISHER

DON BRYANT

Down The Mustang

Hi UKCD 116 CD

OTIS CLAY

That's How It Is

Hi UKCD 110 CD

SYAX, MOTOWN, Atlantic, the history of soul music in the 60s and 70s tends to be written in terms of the major labels that recorded the music. In that pantheon, the Memphis-based Hi Records occupies an honourable but secondary position. More than any of these companies, Hi achieved a homogeneity of sound that, with minor variations, could be made to fit any of its major stars — Al Green first and foremost, who was the backbone of the company's success. Thanks largely to the vision of producer Willie Mitchell, the placing of the musical elements was precisely and, in the end, too rigidly determined: rippling piano here, guitar lick there, now a surge from the strings, then a riff from the horns.

These two generous anthologies track the Hi sound from its early, inchoate form to its later descent into stasis. The Don Bryant anthology opens with a cheerfully nonchalant batch of cover versions, recorded in the mid-60s. They are archetypal, raucous, derivative but filled with zest. Whether there's much point in stringing so many of them together a quarter of a century later is a matter of taste, especially as Bryant's voice has no great range. Other tracks display greater variety, from the quasi-downpour of "I Can't Go On" to the blasting rock 'n' roll of

"That Drivin' Beat" – both tracks engagingly backward-looking in their aesthetic approach. Plaintive and wistful, Bryant's voice never quite imposes itself, but the rhythmic and emotional variety is invigorating.

A couple of years later, Bryant's wife-to-be Ann Peebles began to record for the label, and then in 1970 Willie Mitchell started to work with Al Green. The tough edges of the Hi sound were smoothed away. Peebles and Green were finer singers than Bryant and required a more decorous backdrop. In 1971 Chicago soul shouter Oss Clay joined the label, and his gutsier voice, for a time at least, provided a roughness that contrasted nicely with the Hi sound. He was given fine songs to record: listen to the poetic phrasing that makes music out of a line like "I used to smoke five packs of cigarettes a day" (on "Trying To Live My Life Without You", his best record). In 1975 Clay left the label, but returned in 1977, by which time Mitchell had got the Hi machine stuck in a terminal groove. The band sounds as if it's sleepwalking, Clay's hoarse pleading sounds mannered, the thrill is gone.

One of the complaints about soul albums in this period was that they contained too much filler. Perversely, the CD format exacerbates the problem: a 60s LP might be thought generous if it lasted 35 minutes, these CDs each last about twice that time, and less might well have been more.

NICK KIMBERLEY

TIM BUCKLEY

The Peel Sessions
WMD 072007 CD

CARDS-ON-TABLE time. I've been an enormous admirer of Tim Buckley (trekking to the nearest big town in my teens to obtain import copies of his latest albums, wearing out four of his mid-period albums etc) since the late 1960s, and his death at 28 in 1975 was a massive personal blow. It's not just his voice – though his dynamic control, enabling him to strun and delight in anything from a husky growl to a screaming falsetto, gives him a head start over all contemporary rock singers and many jazz ones – or even the swooning, melancholy beauty of his tunes, it's his choice of musical territory and his

assurance there. Although he started as an almost totally unreconstructed folkie, on both his debut album and the anthemic hippie favourite *Goodbye And Hello* there were signs that he was more interested in vocal improvisation and in textural subtlety than any comparable figure. It all came together on *Happy Sad* and, to a slightly lesser extent, on *Blue Afternoon*, classic albums for which the convenient tag folk/jazz is accurate but as inadequate at conveying their full power and originality as it is when applied to that other masterpiece in an underexplored genre, *Astral Weeks*.

This BBC recording, from 1968, features a trio, Catter CC Collins on congas and Lee Underwood on electric guitar gently complementing the leader's mellow 12-string and plaintive vocals. It's mainly culled from



Goodbye And Hello but also features the lovely 'Sing A Song For You' from *Happy Sad* and 'Happy Time' from *Blue Afternoon*. Might be a little peace-man-twee for some, but there's no mistaking the genius of the man. A very welcome addition to the Buckley canon after the recent superb *Demon* double *Draw Letter*, recorded live at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in the same year.

CHRIS PARKER

MEREDITH D'AMBROSIO

Love Is Not A Game
Suresound SSC 1051D CD

SINGER D'AMBROSIO is backed by pianist-husband Eddie Higgins and his trio of Rufus Reid and Keith Copeland, on an album of mostly standards, jazz or otherwise. It's her

sixth for Sunnyside. Associations with Bill Evans are prominent, with interpretations of his original "For Nenece" (here for some reason re-named "In April"), "Young And Foolish", and "Quiet Now". Standards like "All Or Nothing At All" and "I Love You" (come to think of it, also recorded by Evans) complete the picture.

So far so promising, and it's difficult to pin down exactly why the album fails to appeal. There's a twentiness about the proceedings, and the rather small voice grates on these ears, at any rate. Ever listened to Teresa Goeman MP? No, she's not a singer, but you know what I mean. As for the "perfectly centred intonation" commended by the sleeve-note, that's doubtful. Carol Kidd does this kind of material so much better, you're telling me you haven't already got hold of *This Night We Called It A Day*? If that album is nectar, this is more like Cream of Ambrosio.

ANDY HAMILTON

P. M. DAWN

Of The Heart, Of The Soul and Of The Cross: The Utopian Experience
BlondBBCD LP/MCCD

TWENTY YEARS of casual neglect, complacency and increasingly unstable right-wing retrenchment, and most of the strides forward African-Americans were allowed to make have been undercut. The language of Black rage, unencumbered and violent (NWA) or smart and street-political (Ice T), as pervasive within HipHop. No surprise. Black dreamlike mysticism is less expected, to manifest it may have had to come to the UK – where memories of a recent summer of trans-racial acidhouse love have not quite dimmed – but it's no less deep-rooted and significant, a Rap language of speculative possibility.

P. M. Dawn's dreamy glide on circling ambience, in and out of blurred noise, is anyway as conflated and powerfully strange as Sun Ra's – the samples they acknowledge (Chuck Coren's "Imps Welcome", Sly Stone's "Thankful & Thoughtful", Dr John's "Walking On Gilded Splinters" and Spandau Ballet's "True" among others) they use to unleash intense visions of dread as dark as any era's pop dreaming.

It sounds as if it sounds like happy-chippy

escapism – if it is, it's also hardcore poets, realism, elusive and immediate. Of course, the only people who really hate the word 'escape' are goliaths (says African American science-fantasia Samuel Delany), yearning remembered dreams of not-here-not-yet are always also reminders of present evil when you wake.

HOPEY GLASS

EDWARD ELGAR

*Symphony No 1**Concert Overture "In The South"*

Collins Classics 12092 CD/MP

WHEN ELGAR appeared on the scene in the last decades of the 19th century, England was, in the words of a German commentator, a 'land without music'. By the time of his death in 1934, he had, directly or by his influence on other composers, helped to reverse that sober assessment, if the ravages of Thatcherism have suggested a return to an earlier phylarism, it will take a lot to return to high Victorian barrenness.

The period revivals of figures like Parry and Stanford, and earlier, Sterndale Bennett, serve merely to emphasise the stature of their successor. A perusal of turn-of-the-century concert programmes, with their host of long-forgotten Victorian nonentities, shows the bleakness of the musical scene pre-Elgar. Of course, the composer's fame, ushered in by the *Enigma Variations* of 1899, was in part due to his appeal to the nostalgia and patriotism of the Edwardian era. But his greatness transcends his predilection for the 'Pomp and Circumstance' intercession *adulterate* and the frequently pervasive melancholy.

'In The South' was one of three concert overtures through which Elgar rehearsed the giant step of symphonic production, it is the most substantial, almost a tone-poem. He was forced to take German models, there were no native ones. Elgar came even later than his mentor Brahms to symphonic writing, his First Symphony was premiered in 1908, when he was 51. As the sleeve-notes never tire of saying, it received nearly 100 performances in England alone in its first year, a remarkable figure that testifies to the composer's extraordinary popularity in his lifetime.

On the present recording, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields is conducted by Sir

Neville Marriner. It is a meticulous performance, which nonetheless concedes little in emotional impact to Barbirolli's expansive and classic interpretations from the 50s and 60s. The march-like *ketwoy*, ushered in quietly at the start, brilliantly unifies a work which its first conductor Hans Richter famously claimed as 'the greatest symphony of modern times'.

ANDY HAMILTON

COLEMAN HAWKINS

The Hawk & Sparrow

Bopcity CD80CP015 CD

Dals

Majesty NE-CD-5-98 CD

THESE TWO discs offer different aspects of



later-period Hawk, together with a reminder of a largely-overlooked side of his talents, for putting together a relevant and sometimes provocative opening theme to fuel his ideas and those of others. In this respect he resembles Parker, and maybe the reason neither are acknowledged as composers is that, once launched into a line they've put together, it's very hard to break free of their instrumental style and systems of thought.

The Bopcity disc is a well-organized studio date from 1960, done originally for the obscure Crown label, which partners Hawkins with the subtleties of Thad Jones's trumpet-work against a rhythm section in which Eddie Costa's piano takes the ear (when he's not playing vibes, so who is it then?). There's evidence that Hawkins has carefully structured the session, and it rises

to a notable climax with the final track, 'Shadows', a series of subtle variations on a theme very well-known to Hawkins addicts.

The Stash disc draws mostly on a set done in 1962 in Brussels, with George Arvanitas on piano and Mackey Baker adding his bluesy guitar on some tracks, both of them trying to keep up with Hawkins on a fluent, sometimes combative roll. Drummer Kansas Fields, a great swing-era player, occasionally takes him on, but with Hawkins in this mood, striding through time as though it didn't exist, it's tough going. The unaccompanied title track – a complex extension of the 1948 'Picasso' – shows the renoman at his most intellectual, whilst such old warhorses as 'Disorder At The Border' and 'Kittidee', to say nothing of the elemental 'On My Way', demonstrate other reasons why his playing was not just respected but sometimes feared.

The Stash set (well over twice as long as the Bopcity disc) fills up with part of an earlier (1959) set where his front-line partner is Roy Eldridge. The Hawk n' Roy duopoly could be marvellous or disastrous, depending on a number of circumstances. Here, on another Hawkins classic, 'Bean And The Boys', there's a chase sequence which gives some indication of just how electric things could get whilst remaining (just) under control. On the final 'Bayou Atmosphere' they hit a gloriously relaxed mood. JACK C. COOK

GERRY HEMINGWAY

Spinal Detail

batART CD5084 CD

GERRY HEMINGWAY enjoys his quintet more than any other set-up he plays in, and it shows. His roots are as firmly grounded in Mingus as they are in the work of his most familiar partner Anthony Braxton, or in free-improvisation – and as a composer he balances the forces of organised and spontaneous playing with guile, warmth and a sophisticated sense of dynamics. As a drummer, Hemingway's hustling brasswork would galvanise a conventional jazz band, but he varies the tempo constantly, is a tireless inventor of unexpected colouration and sound effects, and includes steel drums in his repertoire as well.

The ensembles draw on both Mingus-like,

bluesy conversational counterpoint (where the band often sounds much bigger than it really is) and abstract playing; the rhythmic audacity of some of the out-of-phase collective playing of Hemingway's sonorous harmonies adds further gripping ambiguities, and the capacities of the soloists balance the rich resources of the leader's own imagination. Wolter Wierbos on trombone and Don Byron on reeds are both loose, eloquent performers, but Ernst Reijseger on cello is startling in his mixture of lyricism, venom, pastiche and tireless group empathy. Hemingway's best disc as a leader.

JOHN FORDHAM

EARL HINES

Blues So Low! (For Fats)

5504 ST-CD-337 CD

THE HOT Club De France is responsible for this one: they brought Hines to Europe for a concert tour in 1966 as a solo artist because they couldn't afford to pay for any extra musicians. It paid off. Hines's style could always use space, indeed difficulties sometimes arose if he thought he wasn't getting enough of it in some settings. Here he's free to extend his two-handed bravura style to its limits.

The first two tracks feature his rather than, high-pitched vocals in addition to piano. The real meat begins with a long Fats Waller medley (including one song Waller *didn't* write, though he recorded it). This is delicate, complex, funny and imperious by turns. Another lengthy 'blues' sequence follows, which intersperses traditional material with such well-known 12-bars as "Birth Of The Blues", the theme from "Rhapsody In Blue" (gently sent up but preserving nevertheless an authentic period feel) and finally Frank Foster's "Shiny Stockings", which mixes light and shade before firing as strongly as the entire Basie band.

All this is not just good fun, it's a chance to hear one of the great pianists – and one of the great extroverts – in jazz acknowledging some of those who helped form his music, surveying more modern conditions – there's a delightful interpolation of "The Girl From Ipanema" into "Sweet Lorraine" – and dealing generously with it all.

JACK COOKE

ITCHY FINGERS

Live

Emp 6076-2 CD

SINCE WINNING the Schlitz Young Jazz Musicians' contest in 1986 (a show most famous for the performance of its runner-up, the emerging Andy Sheppard), the music of all-saxophone group Itchy Fingers seemed to become even more packed and manic than it was then.

In their earlier incarnations, good as they were, they seemed to have difficulty in avoiding the most troublesome all-sax trap, the rhythmic stiffness that dogs the luckless baritone player who has to spend all night pumping out vamps. And unlike a genuinely relaxed reed ensemble such as the 29th Street Quartet, they have been preoccupied with



filling every chunk with jaw-dropping convolutions, as this compilation of festival dates mostly confirms.

Their strengths are virtuosity and raucousness, as well as snatches of surrealism and a determination not to rely on orthodox jazz materials, but they have trouble – to paraphrase Miles's conversation with Coltrane – taking the saxophones out of their mouths. The theme statement of "Invitation", for instance, which could be a steamy saunter through an attractive theme, quickly becomes a mass of blipping sounds, filigrees stuck into impossible crevices, sudden tango-like tempos. John Graham's breakneck soprano reel "Seven Pounds Fifty" is a virtuosic solo performance but in the same vein, and I clutched on to the lyricism of Graham's lilting medium-tempo piece "The Devil's

Pulpit" (where the rest of the band hangs back from him and they don't appear to be snapping at each other's heels), and the dirgey "Woe", which has an Ellingtonesque fragility bordering on "In A Sentimental Mood".

JOHN FORDHAM

STEVE JANSEN & RICHARD BARBIERI

Stories Across Borders

Virgin Venture CDVE308 CD

I FIRST TOOK this out in a personal stereo on a stroll from Cleveland Street, down through Riding House Street, up along Regent Street, past the major stores and down to Eros, along Lower Regent Street, right into Jermyn Street and down into St James's. Aside from the second track – which is so quiet that I couldn't hear it, even in only mild traffic conditions – it suited perfectly as lightly exotic, teasingly ambient music. But it sounds good sitting at home, too.

It might be unfair to use David Sylvian as a reference point, since both these musicians have been directly responsible for much of the texture and rhythm in Sylvian's own stuff. The eight, usually brief episodes here do, nevertheless, proffer the kind of limpid, exquisite atmospheres which their colleague (and Eno, Budd etc before him) has crafted to something like the ultimate. They tend to do best when Jansen gets to work at a more propulsive rhythm, such as the opening "Long Tales, Tall Shadows" and the thoroughly enchanting "Celebration". Some of the others tend to slip off into the ether, and the closing "One More Zomba" is a frankly boring duet for clavier and keyboard, but Barbieri has the right knack for a fetching chord sequence, and there's some cautious but tangible interplay between the players.

If I call it "refined", I really mean sparse: they don't overload any of the tracks. Recommended to all, since this kind of thing is still hard to do well – and they do it well.

MIKE FISH

KEITH JARRETT

The Well-Tempered Clavier,

Book 2 BWV.870-93

ECM 143114

THE 48 preludes and fugues of Bach's *Das Wohltemperirte Klavier* form one of the most central works in Western music: the musician who does not know them thoroughly is no musician. One therefore might hope that Keith Jarrett would play them, but his recording this repertoire, and on a Japanese harpsichord, is another matter. In effect, he revives an old, long discredited, idea of Bach performance, heavily ploughing straight ahead, mechanically and quite without inflections — just like his earlier Bach recordings. Jarrett cannot entirely mask the music's expressive force, but the deeply introspective nature of some of the pieces in the relatively late Book 2 (1738–42) is missed altogether.

For whom are these note-perfect yet dead excursions intended? Surely not regular listeners to such music, who know they have several other versions to choose from, all superior. Presumably these discs are aimed at those who know Jarrett as a jazz pianist and feel like hearing some Bach from him. If so, an explanatory essay about the music would have been more constructive than the blank pages offered by the present accompanying booklet. But Jarrett would still be misleading them about the real character of these great works.

MAX HARRISON

musical producer. Also reunited from that show are Richards's drumming sidekick Steve Jordan and NRBQ bass player Joey Spampinato, who has brought the rest of NRBQ along with him.

And indeed, this is solid NRBQ territory: homely, good-time boogie and blues. Richards injects an amiably clumsy T-Bone Walker pastiche into the excellent drinking song "Tanqueray", which he co-wrote with Johnson, and mumbles through "Key To The Highway". Clapton fires off breathtakingly lovely solos on the instrumental "Greek Mud" and "Blues #572"; and NRBQ guitarist Steve Ferguson rolls out his Chuck Berry licks, notably on the instrumental title track, where he does the more melodic, pop side of Berry.

Johnson, never one to seek the limelight,

JOHNNIE JOHNSON



JOHNNIE JOHNSON

JOHNNIE JOHNSON

Johnny B Bad

Elektra Nonesuch 7559-61149-1 CD/EP

AND THE blues revival rolls on, with another backroom veteran promoted to front a star-studded album. Johnnie Johnson was Chuck Berry's pianist from day one — in fact, he hired Chuck on a gig in St Louis on New Year's Eve of 1955 — and played on every record Berry made for the next 20 years. Now, in the fashion of Howlin' Wolf's brilliant but little-known guitarist Hubert Sumlin, who launched a solo career a couple of years ago on the eve of his 60th birthday, here's Johnson making his debut album at 67.

Following the blueprint laid by John Lee Hooker's *The Healer*, *Johnny B Bad* comes complete with radio-friendly rock star guests, in this case Keith Richards and Eric Clapton, who both played with Johnson on the 1987 Chuck Berry documentary *Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll*, for which Richards was

sings just two of the six vocals, but his flowing piano speaks for itself. For a man who never had a lesson he's really not bad. A mellow companion to Willie Dixon's recent *Hidden Chords*.

PHIL MONEILL

SYL JOHNSON

Music To My Ears

Hi Records HI UK CD 117 CD

LUCKLESS SYL for all his weary, lonely, regretful-gentle, pinched badman hollet, he'll never have a book written about him. The books about country blues leave him tall the long lists of also-rans, an emblem only of how no one knows how much there's been, to be hymned only when the usual stories are all told out. Luckless Syl: the music was over in

all but fact by the time Hi, that final tough, craftsmanly Memphis label, flourished (in the 70s Willie Mitchell producing Al Green). An anomaly, a hangover from a dying era.

One final LP, from the early 80s *My Fine Brown Frame* — with covergirl (wet, semi-dressed, on all fours) to match the words — pushed him briefly up into wider chatter, when a too-honest solo, wicked record steered up a little "sexism-in-music" debate. Then Boardwalk folded.

Syl's luck hands him at last this Best Of, with sleeve-notes that enthuse about songs not on it ("Frame" and a clutch of pre-Hi near-hits). Soundtrack for what might have been, missed opportunities, forgotten epiphanies, punched-out charts and tight, rich precision grooves: desolate ordinary-adult survivor's blues-pop that never hit, for no good reason and many stupid ones. When lists are made, even revisionist ones, he won't be on them. History, which likes lists, lies. These songs — "I'm Yours", "Don't Do It", "That's Just My Luck" — curs closer to the real day-to-day meaning of song than all of dark fame. *I can't go on / I'll go on*

MARK SINKER

HENRY KAISER/JIM O'ROURKE

Tomorrow Comes Where You Live

Venus CD014 CD

WADI GYSI/HANS REICHEL

Shore-Down

Inoki CD023 CD

A BRACE of guitar duos pairing old hands with new faces on the international improv scene. And it's not necessarily the old hands who do all of the talking here. Kaiser's match with fellow American O'Rourke is the more varied, fitful and exciting of the two pairings, the best of which matches Kaiser's pre-Synclavier duets with Fred Frith (another episode which had Kaiser playing very much "in the raw"). Electric axes predominate, and the fascination in much of this music stems from the differing techniques employed, contrasting Kaiser's electronic transformations of the guitar's sound with O'Rourke's physical attacks on the instrument. Both men get to perform solo, O'Rourke's lush, linear "Just



As A Wall Of Quiet Flowing Sounds Near' echoing the influence of Keith Rowe, whilst Kaiser's "Born On Sneeshoes" is another classic showing of near-polyphonic proportions developing out of a straight blues sequence. It's the closer, "The Palace Of Memory", which is the real blinder of the collection, a turbulent and intense excursion into the realms of noise-as-aesthetic which would put even the heavyweights of Industrial Music to shame.

In spite of what the title may suggest, *Són-Doum* is the more immediately digestible of the two; pretty, even. Mixing studio and in-concert footage, all 11 duets spring primarily from Reichel's delicate sense of tone and colour. No wilful abstraction here, much of it could easily pass for New Age music save for its slowly unfolding complexity and density. Both men play with a telling economy, allowing the rich, resonant qualities of their music to ring loud through the collection.

DAVID JILL

GEOFF KEEZER

Here And Now

Blue Note CDP 96691 2 CDLP

SAW HIM recently at London's Tenor Clef. Unaided, occasionally even hindered, by the resident Peter Ind/Mark Taylor rhythm section, the young pianist nonetheless found space to flash a precocious and prodigious musical talent, one that combines a scurrying, fiery youth with a measured, very compositional approach to the keyboard.

A veteran at just 20, Keezer has already graduated from the late Art Blakey's finishing school and had two LPs out on Sunnyside. For his debut Blue Note release, he has not only assembled a top class line-up of Steve Nelson (vib), Peter Washington (b), Billy Higgins (d), and on three tracks, Donald Harrison (as), but both in his choice of tunes and in his own compositions, he shows a remarkable maturity, and a penchant for the original. On Duke Ellington's "Agra", for example, a ballad from the *Far East Suite*, he echoes Harry Carney's baritone feature by giving part of the melody to bassist Washington.

His own tunes display a somewhat grand sensibility. "Headed Off At The Pass" is a complex sequence of giddying melodies and

rune signatures, and "Turning Point" cleverly lays Keezer's speedy, shimmering solo over a slow, modal boss pulse. For someone whose youth could excuse him from slipping into the predictable, Keezer is actually the most consistently inventive soloist on the album, his improvisations often displaying a playfulness that recalls Art Tatum.

PHILIP WATSON

WYNTON MARSALIS

Tune In Tomorrow - the original soundtrack from "Aunt Julia And The Scriptwriter"

CBS 467745-1 CD

ELMER BERNSTEIN

A Rage In Harlem

VSD 5125 CD

WYNTON MARSALIS
THE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK FROM
TUNE IN TOMORROW



A FILM score has to set the scene and accompany the action. But the music can go further still by putting the emotions and thoughts of the characters into sound. A high point of American film composition was Duke Ellington's *Anatomy Of A Murder*, which made the maximum use of the available instruments to enhance the themes and give credibility to the images. How does Wynton Marsalis follow in the footsteps of his hero?

Aunt Julia And The Scriptwriter is a new film for which Marsalis has produced the soundtrack. In the relocation from the book's original setting of downtown Lima to upbeat New Orleans - the home of jazz and the hometown of the music plays a vital role. The blues-derived melodies, muted horn solos and swinging organ textures convey the extrovert musical style of

the city, the colourful combination of characters, and the constant blending of reality and fantasy.

Marsalis has composed a score that shows he has seriously studied the formal perfection of the New Orleans ensemble style. From the sensuous dance numbers portraying nightlife in the French Quarter to the moody cafe society melodies, the music throughout suggests the proper southern Louisiana ambience. Yet the soundtrack also develops the characters. The contemplative baritone saxophone of Joe Temperley and the humorous, evasive clarinet playing by Alvin Batiste accurately portray the bizarre central character, radio soap writer Pedro Carmichael. The two lovers, Aunt Julia and her nephew, have their affair tracked through its tentative beginnings and subsequent hiccups to its ultimate conclusion with a suggestion of swing era pastiche. This is a far cry from the Miles Davis influence which used to hang around Marsalis' neck, and an indication of the new direction in which Wynton is now moving. A refreshing soundtrack from this sector, which deserves recognition in its own right.

A Rage In Harlem is in the same genre of comedy thriller and tacy romance. It's also set in the 50s but the soundtrack this time comes from the distinctive musical signature of Elmer Bernstein.

Renowned for his epic, heaving film scores, Bernstein claims that the jazz idiom is ideally suited to conveying emotions of anguish and frustration. His music brings the plot elements into focus by concentrating on the dramatic friction of the story, which winds up in the familiar triangle of humour, sex and violence. Jazz is melted with other musics to convey an appreciation for the poverty-stricken yet vibrant Harlem of the 50s. Swinging clarinet solos played over the orchestral theme couplet with menacing, clashing horns to provide the regular quota of melodrama and excitement.

As one of the most recognizable voices in film music, Bernstein's 1950s moody film scores are his trademark. Easy to respond to, the music accompanies the film convincingly, yet does little to embody the individual characters. This latest accompaniment fits nicely into an easy listening niche but is scarcely essential listening.

ADOLF YARON



INGRAM MARSHALL

Albatraz

New Albany NAH10 CD

THE PHOTOGRAPHS by Jim Bengtson reproduced in the insert booklet are not simple illustrations of Marshall's music. The album was developed by composer and photographer interacting with each other's work-in-progress, and although originally conceived as a record-book package it was unveiled in 1984 as a performance piece.

Albatraz the risk is surrounded by the sea as *Albatraz*, the composition is bracketed by two sections from *The Bay*, an ambient tape work used during an exhibition of photographs. Long tones buoy up muffled chords and chiming piano motifs, mostly picturing the sea and the craft and birdlife it supports. The Introduction to *Albatraz* proper brings in busy minimalist piano traffic over electronic pedal drones before a series of movements describing "The Approach . . . Rules and Regulations", "Solitary and Cell Doors". The last-named illustrates particularly clearly Marshall's techniques of using real sounds taped within the walls of the prison (echoing footsteps or distant, eerie, humourless laughter) or around the island (dog-horns and bells) which he then mixes into the studio-created music.

Marshall employs procedures which are pretty standard, but he does so in a way that stimulates the imagination as well as contemplation of the issues raised by the penal system which *Albatraz* represents. His use of distorted, variable-speed tapes of men speaking the words "rules and regulations" evokes the grinding predictability of each day in an institution, and as this track moves into "Cell Doors" the repeated slamming as built into a pounding, crushing rhythm blotting out all else. **HARRY WITHERSON**

KESHAVAN MASLAK

Mother Russia

Leo Records LR77 CD

BORN INTO a Ukrainian family in New York, Maslak made his name in the States as Kenny Milhous, a pop alto player. This CD documents a tour of Lithuania and the Ukraine where he had the fortune to encounter some excellent players

The pieces are sandwiched between two solo excursions which show a rapid technique, an explosive sound and a refreshingly direct sense of climax. A duet with pianist Misha Alperin in Vilnius has him fencing with a typically Slavonic mixture morbid emotionalism tinged with irony, cossack jigs, noisy outbursts. The excited audience applauds every turn, creating a circus atmosphere. It recalls Gary Windo's work with Carla Bley, but maintains the undefended rawness characteristic of Leo Records performances.

There are five duets with Anatoly Vapurov, the revered Russian tenor player who moved to Bulgaria in 1986, having taught music at the Leningrad Conservatoire and partnered pianist Sergey Kuryokhin for eight years. Vapurov's tenor is serious and abrupt, the

KESHAVAN MASLAK MOTHER RUSSIA



dialogue heated yet accessible. Then there is a 24-minute duet between Maslak and Vladimir Tarasov (drummer of the late lamented Ganelin Trio) titled "Kenny Talks Turkey With Vladimir". It is brilliant, full of pungent interaction and the peculiar sense of the fantastic that characterises Russian improvisation.

Abrasive yet swirlingly romantic, Maslak has added another aspect to American jazz with these encounters. **BEN WATSON**

W A MOZART

The Piano Concertos

Sony Classical SK12K 36131 CD

Piano Concertos No 21, No 27

Sony Classical SK 36185 CD

Legendary Interpretations:

Seven Piano Concertos

Sony Classical SK4K 36519 CD

Complete Piano Concertos, Vols 6, 7, 8

Nones 8 550206/7/8 CD

AND STILL they come . . . another skylful of Mozart releases, descending on your savings like a great cloud of locusts. The Murray Perahia/English Chamber Orchestra *The Piano Concertos* is probably the most acclaimed complete cycle of the last 15 years sensitive, well-shaped performances impeccably played in the traditional classical style. Perahia has a lightness of touch, a buoyancy, that is very attractive, and if I find the modern orchestra a touch grandiose at times, that's down to my personal taste, no reflection on the ECO. Perahia is especially good on the later concertos; his No 27 is as unrepresable, if not quite as impetuous, as the famous Gilels version, and it strikes a perfect balance between delicacy and zest in that sudden spurge of great concertos which Mozart wrote in the mid-1780s. With the whole cycle now reissued in a mid-price, 12-CD box-set, this is one of the bargains of the autumn.

Perahia also has a new, full-price recording of *Concerto 21* and *27* with the Chamber Orchestra Of Europe, where he perhaps touches one or two higher points than before but without ever matching the overall authority of his earlier versions. In particular, the opening *Allargo* of *No 21* has some breathtaking episodes - piano runs like cascades of light - but there are odd lulls too, as if the desire to chase inspiration on the wing has led to a temporary loss of bearings.

The *Legendary Interpretations* of Robert Casadesu - a mid-price, three-CD set comprising *Concerto No's 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27* and the *Concerto For Two Pianos, K365* - eschew any such godliness for a clear and local exposition of musical architecture. Where Perahia can suddenly "lift" the music in momentary rapture, Casadesu's gift was to illuminate the line with precise, exquisite phrasing, his guiding light a sure sense of grace, of poise, of structural coherence. George Szell with either the Columbia Symphony Orchestra or the Cleveland Orchestra offers finely-judged support on most tracks; Eugene Ormandy with the Philadelphia



Orchestra play on the Double Concerto, where the second pianist is Gaby Casadesu.

Finally, three new volumes from the excellent on-going cycle by Jeno Jandó on the bargain-price Naxos label (as recommended in my Mozart CD survey in *The Wire* 88). Volume six has *Concertos No's 22 and 11*, seven has *No's 25 and 16* and eight has *No's 19, 8 and 6*. The orchestral work, by the *Concentus Hungaricus/Mátyás Ánral*, is possibly a little undercharacterised at times, but Jandó is such a refreshing and appealing player, he carries all before him. Never mannered or pompous or over-earnest, he sounds simply as if he takes enormous but unassuming pleasure in playing this music and so makes it instantly accessible. For a sampler, try volume six – he captures beautifully the alternating sparkle and dreaminess of the lovely *No 22* and finds both poignancy and courtly elegance in the earlier *No 11*. At less than £5 a disc, here's a perfect antidote to recession.

GRAHAM LOCK

MICHAEL NYMAN

Prospero's Books

Decca 425 224 CD/MC

THE PARTNERSHIP between Nyman and Peter Greenaway is one of those rare screen marriages made in heaven: you would have to invoke Hitchcock and Bernard Herrmann, or Fellini and Rota, or Powell and Brian Easdale to find a comparable instance of collaborators so temperamentally attuned to one another. They share the same obsession with history, the same sense of parody, the same rigorous valuation (at least on the surface) of intellect over emotion, and it's become almost impossible to conceive of a Greenaway film with any other kind of soundtrack – Wim Mertens's score for *The Belly of An Architect* being so stylistically imitative that most people watching the movie assumed it was by Nyman himself.

Michael Nyman is, however, an immensely busy composer these days, and I wonder just how much effort he continues to put into these scores. Cheerfully unembarrassed about plundering his own compositions (and, of course, the works of other composers within the European tradition), he cobbled together much of *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* from his Heyvel stadium requiem

Mensural. As for this latest soundtrack to Greenaway's re-interpretation of *The Tempest*, it contains a fair amount of new music – most of it vocal, and sung in a variety of styles ranging from Sarah Leonard's "boy soprano" to the more earthy and colloquial tones of Ute Lemper – but there's also been some surreptitious recycling. At least six of the instrumental pieces are taken from *La Traversée De Paris*, the music Nyman wrote to accompany a large-scale celebration of Parisian history in 1989 (available in France on Criterion CRITCD 1).

Nothing wrong with that, of course, but the unwary listener should perhaps bear in mind, before passing to admire the pastoral aptness of "Cornfield", say, that a couple of years ago the same music served just as well as an evocation of the Passage de l'Égalité



NELLY POUGET

Le Dore

Maison Margiela PH17282 CD

Perhaps this tells us less about Nyman's working methods than about our ability, as listeners and viewers, to invent our own correspondences between the music and the image.

JONATHAN COE

"I do not know Nelly Pouget," the sleeve-note writer says. That makes two of us. Our liner man goes on to say Nelly is "a Barbarian in the Greek sense of the word a Foreigner", which is neither helpful (he doesn't specify where she comes from) nor very friendly.

Pouget, who plays tenor and soprano, recorded this quartet album in Paris. It

features Sunny Murray on drums and Siegfried Kessler on piano. *Le Dore's* general stylistic orientation is toward Coltrane circa 1965 and most of Pouget's compositions have a see-sawing Coltrane-like feel. If not vastly original, Nelly plays with a real energizing power on both her horns, boosted by her partners on the date.

Kessler, one of the consistent exponents of new jazz in France (records with Barre Phillips and Stu Martin in the 60s, quite a few with Shepp in the 70s), fires off big chords that are like flares above the dark rolling flow of Murray's wonderful drums and the susurrus of his single sizzle cymbal.

On soprano, Nelly employs two distinctly demarcated approaches. Most of her playing on the title track has that pinched, nasal "bagpipe" quality that unavoidably brings "My Favourite Things" to mind, but in the tune's final moments she switches to a more open "classical" sound. The latter approach is dominant on "Expansion", a very simple but pretty, melodic piece.

Her tenor on "Auge Promenade" is fiery in the extreme, and sings extraordinarily high and clear in the overtone range, getting to places even Pharoah Sanders hasn't reached.

STEVE LAKE

THE RECENTS

Zombie Blood Bath On The Life Of Digs

nuu 090529 CD

A FRIEND recently remarked on hearing some vintage AMM that "these crazy sounds could pass for great horror movie soundtracks." It's not the first time I'd heard that kind of response from someone coming to electro-acoustic improvised music for the first time, maybe that impressionism helped them make partial sense of what was previously an alien musical vocabulary. Free music = scary sounds, right?

Rather than playing to this stereotype alone, *Zombie Blood Bath* goes a stage further, presenting its mix of core songform, expansive free improvisations and lush, layered soundscapes as a mock movie soundtrack. Not your common-or-garden Frankenstein flick either, Messrs Mike Cooper (guitars 'n' gizzmos), Lof Codhall (saxes and other things) and Ruger Turner (percussion and electronics) rifle amongst a plethora of sub-Hammer

horror devices, alluding to the techniques of cheap Euro horror features and video nasty splatterpacks.

The ten-minute "Under Threat" is about as close as *Zombiv...* gets to representing the band's sound in concert, but then this album is as much about *trash-as-aesthetic*, cheap ruses and maximum tack. "Routine Op", set off by Lol Coxhill's curdling soprano, is every bit as tasteless as the Love Organ Transplants sketch from Monty Python's *The Meaning Of Life*, only this can *really* have you reaching for the sackbag. Elsewhere things play to the lowest common denominator of the horror genres. Mike Cooper's Hawaiian blues forgery is equally as corny and dumb as the verbal sketches lettraced throughout (Roger Turner, in contrast with Coxhill's seasoned vocal delivery, sounds not so much decapitated as dead per se!).

A slice of cheap 'n' nasty, groin-inducing, lampoonery-cum-lunacy DAVID ILLIC

JIMMY ROWLES

Remember When

Mastrom CDCHE 11 CD

**JIMMY ROWLES,
RED MITCHELL,
DONALD BAILEY**

Trio

Caps 74092 CD

Obviously, everything was right the day he made *Remember When*. In company with the young bassist, Eric Von Essen, he produces wonderful, elegant music, with not a note, not a pause, a millimetre out of place. It's one of the best things he's ever done. I've been playing it since it arrived, and will probably continue to do so for the rest of my life.

Trio should have been as good. The other participants — Red Mitchell on bass and Donald Bailey on drums — are both excellent, and, one would have thought, highly compatible with Rowles. None the less, it misses fire a little. For one thing, the repertoire, containing a lot of originals, is less interesting. For another, I'm not sure that, with Rowles, a drummer, even one as good as Bailey, isn't more a distraction than an asset.



It's still a very good album, but not the pink of perfection Rowles can attain.

MARTIN GAYFORD

**THE BILLY STRAYHORN
PROJECT FEATURING THE
MICHAEL HASHIM
QUARTET**

Lotus Blossom

Scab ST CD 531 CDLP

TRY AND guess how many jazz albums were made during the last 20 years. Then try and imagine how many "original compositions" appeared on them. Whatever the answer, the number is going to be vast. Yet paradoxically very few of these originals are ever recorded again, simply because they were only ever

intended as a functional vehicle for blowing on. Over the years, it seems, jazz musicians have become more involved with the intrinsic mechanical problems a composition poses at the expense of developing the art of interpretation. The emotional weight a player can bring to his improvisation has been superceded by speed and complexity of line.

Thus The Strayhorn Project is cheering. It's an attempt to reinstate the interpretative art in jazz by confronting the challenge posed by meaty compositions that demand something more than just blowing over the changes. In such circumstances it is perhaps less important that the project is not wholly successful than that a cause for so much "grey" jazz is being addressed.

Hashim has a good round alto sax tone that might even become an identity. He shows due concern for melodic as well as harmonic development and he is technically a sound player. But he does not get to the heart of the material, or impose himself upon it in the way a Ben Webster or a Johnny Hodges used to do. This might sound harsh because there are so young players who achieve this, and this is precisely the problem. There are almost two generations of players who lack both the individuality and the depth to make an album like this work. It's to Hashim's credit that he's come close.

STUART NICHOLSON

FRANÇOIS TUSQUES

1965, Free Jazz

In Situ 590979 CD

ALMOST ENTIRELY unknown in the UK, this album has often been cited by critics and musicologists on the European mainland as one of the historically important recordings, up there with *Muhim Gux* and *Karyoku* (which it predates) and the earliest vinyl showings of Gunter Hampel and Tomasz Stanko (which put it to the post by a narrow squeak).

But French pianist Tusques never subscribed to the notion of a European jazz as a force apart from the American model. His free jazz is intensely melodic in the Ornette tradition, and the blues is never very far away, there's none of the up-against-the-wall fury of Breitzmann, though Tusques was angry enough in his own solidistic manner.



Later albums have track titles like "George Jackson Assassinate Pat Les Pigs", and when the black free players arrived en masse in Paris, Tusques worked with Clifford Thornton and Byard Lancaster and brought Alan Silva, Sonny Murray and Alan Shorter onto his own sessions.

Back in 1965, however, he had to make do with local help, and got the best, with particularly strong input from Michel Portal (bass clarinet), tenorist/flautist Francois Jeanneau, bassist Bob Guenn and the still-unsung drummer Charles Soudras (later to contribute memorably to recordings by Frank Wright and Ted Curson). The "free jazz" they play together isn't entirely off-the-cuff, there are heads to launch the improvising and Tusques's strong chording frequently defines the music's tonal centre.

Heard now, it won't strike the listener as wildly innovative but not does it sound like a session from 26 years ago. This is very well-crafted and controlled music, and the CD mix is exceptionally clear. **STEVE LANE**

STEVE WILLIAMSON
Rhythm Time (That Was Us')
Polydor 5132-5 CD/MC/EP

IT HAS NEVER been easy to find one's own voice in jazz and many a player has been accused of plagiarism, but Steve Williamson has achieved an uncanny and disappointing likeness to Steve Coleman and the M-Base style with his second album.

It's a dramatic departure from his first record and disappointing because his debut was original and distinctive. Though there were elements of the New York funk sound on a few of the tracks, and Coleman produced the album and his guitarist Dave Gilmore played on a few of the numbers, these were in the minority. *Rhythm Time's* tracks are all, bar one, in Coleman's style.

From the opening bar the resemblance is clear. The deceptively timed, slow intro blossoms into a jerky funk and Cassandra Wilson enters, customarily soaring and sliding around the changes. The bass mumbles, Gilmore's guitar picks intermittently and the drums play tentily with the time. Williamson then enters on alto with cold tone and angular lines, hovering round the tune with familiar waspish restlessness. Trombonist

Dennis Rollins, with his warm, bossy tone and aggressive improvising, is certainly less imitative and where Williamson plays tenor or soprano he begins to sound like himself, but the grooves remain strictly M-Base.

The only track that isn't a copy, "The Rock", is a slow, acoustic ballad and allows Williamson's breathy, modern tenor sound to flow. Ultimately, though, it sits uncomfortably amongst the rest of the hard-edged tracks. Similarly the snappy "High Voltage" pays homage to British jazz fusion, but it's the last track on the album. The damage has already been done.

There's no doubt Steve Williamson and his band are talented players – it takes more than rote learning to resemble someone else's sound – and what he produces is as exhilarating and dense as Coleman in places. From a



player who is quoted in his first album's liner notes as saying "it's essential that English musicians develop a sound of their own", however, *Rhythm Time* is anything but.

EAT RA CONNELLY

YES
Yes! Yes!
ATCO 7565-016-1 CD/MC

"I THINK what America really liked about our music was that it was...terribly English – full of quirkiness and lots of influences," says Steve Howe in the lavish but occasionally irritating book which accompanies this megaworded of blossom, jetsam and plankton trawled from Yes's 25-year voyage across the topographic oceans

of complicated rock. I'm quite convinced that this is the One Great Truth about Yes which eludes their fans and detractors alike. The world at large was sold a popular artform derived from African-American music at the beginning of this century and has loved it ever since, mostly. The fact that a nightclub singer, a schoolboy chorister, a jazz drummer and a couple of white, British R&B appropriators could get together in a band which in its time has been famous for everything except paying these kind of dues seems to be at the root of the to-say-the-least polarised opinions which have followed in Yes's exceptionally frothy wake.

This is borne out, of course, by the emergence of the British new wave at the end of the seventies. Long before anyone had had a chance to decipher any of the Ramones' lyrics there was suddenly this flood of terribly impetuous bands singing about unsavory or simply banal subjects. This, however, was also 'terribly British' in its own soar way, and displaced the extrovert optimism of the past 20 years of popular music, just like that.

All along, no one ever asked what would happen to rock stars who reach middle-age, perhaps because no one ever believed they'd live so long, either in career or real terms. The answer, in the case of Yes, is that they get packaged into a quadruple boxed set (this *Yes* to the Yes) full of stuff which fans will already have (mostly – see below) and which non-fans, of course, will be ignoring.

Do you get "Roundabout"/"Fish"/"Dusticate"/"Good People"/"Edge"/"Awaken"/"Lonely Heart" (insert your favourite here), cry the former? Need you ask? Are the oddments grafted on to the above worth hearing? Well, yes (the long-lost Square/White single is really OK, the Billy Sherwood track has an unexpected plausibility and a live take of Lennon and McCartney's "I'm Down" is so bad it's good) and no (doodlings in Vevey Cathedral, innovation-free live versions).

What's wrong with the book? No photo captions – and believe me, some of them need to be explained away as soon as possible. Nice Roger Dean graphics? Yes. Yes, yes.

Ultimately it all feels simply because trying to re-order chunks of Yes music for this purpose is like shuffling the chapters of a book. This stuff only really works in its original musical context. Nice pressie, though.

TOM CORBIN



FAST LICKS



Make Atherton plays a straight bat to the new releases and reasons.

BIG JOE & THE DYNAFLOWS *GOOD ROCKIN' DADNEY (Powerlane POW 4103 LP)* The LP's cover shows Big Joe Maher, a burly chap indeed, getting on down in front of a Wurliitzer 716, and the selections on the record reflect what you might have heard if you'd fed a few dimes into such a machine round about 1955, assuming that you'd been nearer to Bilston than to Bilston at the time. There's a Berry-style rocker in "Good Rockin' Duddy", a T-Bone Walker blues in "No Good Woman", a Smiley Lewis New Orleans rocker in "Hook Line And Sinker" with its delicious piano by Kevin McKendree, a Joe Turner shoutier in "Okeshmokeshop", an express McNeely-style sax honker in "Hand-clapping", and so on. Joe sings in an appropriately sizeable voice with a hint of roadhouse roughness, and the band, led by the Telecaster of producer Tom Principato, plays with verve and affection.

BOOZOO CHAVIS *BOOZOO CHAVIS (Elektra 61146 CD/MC)* Just follow me," Wilson Chavis instructs his band before starting "41 Days", "and if I go wrong we all wrong, but it gotta be done anyway." Singer/accordionist Chavis, a fleeting star in the 1950s, is making a remarkable comeback, and this zydeco-filled set sees his debut for a major label at the age of 60. His happy-go-lucky approach, infectiously rhythmic playing and solidly pounding band (including son Charles Chavis on tub board and barking dog) make numbers like "Dogg Hill" and "Tee Black" into sheer back-country delights, even if one can't fathom the lyrics, which most of the time one can't.

ERWIN HELFER *PLAYS CHICAGO PIANO (Stephane SCB-9010 LP)* Despite the title and despite Helfer's reputation as a blues stylist, don't expect an album of Ammons and Yancey favourites here. A highly articulate player, his repertoire on this 13-track LP ranges from the cool to the cheeky, the

reflective to the rollicking, taking in standards like "Sweet Georgia Brown" and "These Foolish Things" as well as some of his own blues tunes and a few of other people's. Recorded solo and with admirable clarity by Mike Rashfield in Chicago, the programme is adventurous enough to avoid the easy-listening tag without being in the least demanding. Listen to "Take The A Train" as an example of how to reach old songs new tricks whilst retaining their melodic appeal.

A J LORIA *NEW ORLEANS, NEW ORLEANS (Nola 26 LP)* The Parley-based Nola label's release schedule is not hectic, but over the years they have issued recordings by an interesting variety of New Orleans artists, ranging from traditional jazz to pop. A J

Loria Perhaps if the Meters had been from California they would have sounded like Booker T and The MG's, sliding down Blindness Avenue after a promising start. If they'd hailed from further north, they might have exuded torrid, sweaty funk. That they had the good taste to be from New Orleans is our good fortune. This quartet, just organ, guitar, bass and drums with only occasional vocals and never any added instruments or overdubs, had, in the late 60s and early 70s, the knack of playing skatnight funk which sounded so relaxed that it must have been recorded in an easy chair. Most of their remarkable run of US hits are here, together with tracks from their LPs for the Josie label, tricky little tunes like "Chicken Strut", "Ease Back" and their first hit, "Sophisticated Cassy", with beautifully syncopated drumming and a bass that means it. It's amazing that such a formula can sustain interest over the length of a double CD, but it sure does.



THE OLIMPICS DOIN' THE HULLY GULLY (Ace CHD 324 CD) Led by rasping-voiced Walter Ward, The Olympics vocal group scored several hits in the USA, and even a couple in Britain, in the late 50s and early 60s, and there are probably three versions of them touring the US oldies circuit to this day. With their semi-comic style and preference for novelty songs, they could have been The Coasters, but they didn't have the benefit of Leiber & Stoller as songwriters. Instead, they relied heavily upon Smith & Goldsmith who churned out slight but appealing numbers which favoured the world of dance crazes ("Hully Gully", "The Scotch"), cowboys and innjuns ("Dodge City", "Big Chief Little Pass") and TV sleuths ("Private Eye" - "A real cool cat with a soft-behind hat"). These early 60s cuts, mostly set to a piano-pounding, easy-rocking beat, represent intelligent use of the CD format, as the best part of three original LPs is included.

Loria, a white Crescent City singer/pianist, is a hard man to classify: he's a singer-songwriter, but his music is more middle-of-the-road than that epithet would suggest. He's backed up by a good selection of homeboys, notably a brace of Marsalises on trumpet and sax and John Vidacovich on drums. Most of his material is his own and suggests a love-hate relationship with his home city. "Down To New Orleans" presents a stark look at the city's ills, whereas "Buster Holmes" (about his local soul food joint) and "My Country, Vieux Carré", *inter alia*, are pure odes of love. Then there's "Walk On The Wild Side" set to a reggae rhythm just to compound the mystery.

PRINCE BUSTER ORIGINAL GOLDEN OLDIES VOLUME ONE (Prince Buster PB 9 LP) Prince Buster Campbell's description of ska on the sleeve of another LP is as good as any: "the guitar goes skin, skin, the drum rest on the after beat, two sax goes boop". Played by an

THE METERS *FUNKY MIRACLE (Charly NEV*





exotic-sounding crew like drummer Drum-bago and harmonica man Charlie Organare, and fronted by the Prince's distinctive singing, this ska has a vibrancy and a wallowing beat which are hard to ignore. The dozen tracks here, such as "Madness" and the British-recorded "Wash Wash" (with backing by the dubious-sounding Les Dawson Blues Unit) are from the 1963 period when ska still retained a heavy influence from the Jamaican R&B which had begotten it. Though the lyrics were intended to be topical and immediate, as in "Blackhead Chinaman" where Buster lambasts singer Derrick Morgan for leaving his label and signing for the Chinese-owned Beverly's Records, the appeal of the music hasn't diminished one jot since this album first appeared. Fetch my poric pie hat.

SCREAMING LORD SUTCH ROCK AND HORROR (*ACE CHM 65 CD*). What has David Sutch got going for him? He's never had much of a singing voice, though his screams are truly blood-curdling, his songs are limited in their themes, and he isn't an MP yet. One day perhaps he will be Prime Minister and become a grey person, but until then he will remain this country's greatest self-publicist. Certainly he's enough of a name to attract musicians of the calibre of tenor saxman Peter Thomas, Rory Gallagher's pianist Lou Martin and drummer Wild Bob Burgos to his sessions. This early 80s date yields just what you would expect: hard-rocking music with sledgehammer drums and blasting sax solos, a quota of screams, and a clutch of songs which variously celebrate the pleasures of graveyards and the sheer joy of rock 'n' roll.

IRMA THOMAS DOWN IN MUSCLE SIGMA (*Chess RED 27 CD*). One line in the Penn/Oldham song "Cheater Man" almost justifies the purchase of this CD: "You've been spinning your wheels and getting no traction, drive on home and get the actus". But if that's not sufficient reason for you, rest assured that the 13 tracks on this neglected 1967 session are nearly all of the highest quality. Irma Thomas did not gain her tag of "The soul queen of New Orleans" lightly: here, at 26, she's already a complete soul artist, able to

range from chuckling skittishness to the most intense emotion in the space of a song.

VARIOUS ARTISTS THE BEST OF ALB ROCKABILLY/RAREST ROCKABILLY & HILLBILLY BOOGIE (*ACE CHD 311 CD*). The late Enzo Ferrari, asked why he only made three cars a week, said "If I made more, they would not be Ferraris". Similarly, if rockabilly had progressed any more it would not have been rockabilly: the raw directness of the music enjoyed a brief vogue in the mid-50s before developments in sound and production techniques moved on. But those few years saw a plethora of young hopefuls, and older country artists seeking a new audience, cut discs for small labels throughout America. Some were pressed in quantities of a few hundred only, explaining their rarity today they always were rare. This disc gathers 28 of the best, their slapped basses, aggressive guitars and go-for-broke vocals giving them a vibrancy whose appeal is timeless.

VARIOUS ARTISTS THE DEL-FI AND DONNA STORY (*ACE CHD 313 CD*). Ace Records put a whole lotta love into their oldest compilations. This one charts the progress from 1958 to 1963 of two Californian labels owned by Bob Keene: it boasts 31 tracks, copious notes, photos of crashingly obscure artists, and even has the Del-Fi logo on the disc itself. The music begins with adolescent Chicanos like Chan Romero warbling greasily over grumbling guitars and Woolworths drumkits, progresses through the pompily pop of Johnny Crawford and the guilelessly earnest R&B of Ron Holden and ends with the early stirrings of surf music from Dick Dale, Bruce Johnston and, surprisingly, David Gates. Along the way there are The Address Brothers, soon to inflict "Never My Love" on an undeserving world, a peach of a rocking guitar instrumental from The Hawks, and an unmissed Rutchie Valens track.

VARIOUS ARTISTS STARS OF TEXAS HONKY TONK (*ACE LTD 603 CD*). One of the first releases in Ace's new Limited Edition series of which only 1,500 copies will be pressed, this LP collects 18 tracks cut in the 50s for

the leading country label Starday. Texas honky-tonk, a style which can boogie and swing but which does so with a lighter touch than rock 'n' roll, is here largely built around the Starday house band featuring the rhythmically plucked guitar of Hal Harris, the whining steel of Herbie Remington and Doc Lewis's deliciously succinct piano. Up front, leading regional stars like R D Hendon and Bill Mack, along with lesser lights such as Leo Ogletree, sing sincere, cryin' in my beer ditties like "Let This Kiss Bid You Good-bye", with veteran Bill Nettles injecting warm humour into his "Wine-O Boogie" and "Gumbo Mumbo".

VARIOUS ARTISTS RIDE DADDY RIDE (*Chessly CD 272 CD*). Subtitled "... and other songs of love", this is in fact a collection of what used to be known in the R&B business as party records - songs which exhort the listener to "Ride Daddy Ride" or even "Drill Daddy Drill". In other words, songs about sex. Drawn from the music's heyday in the late 40s and early 50s, most of the 21 tracks are raucous, good-time jumping music, to which backdrop the vocalists exploit even more innocently than the writer of the disc's liner notes. Bullmoose Jackson brags about his "Big Ten-Inch Record", Todd Rhodes suggests a trip in a "Rocket 69" and The Swallows, in one of the most musically satisfying tracks, present the perennial excuse of the under-endowed: "It Ain't The Meat It's The Motion".

VARIOUS ARTISTS ♪ HOT ROD HITS (*ACE CHD 303 CD*). From the heyday of surf music, 1963, come 31 instrumentals by The Deuce Coups, The De-Fenders and The Darts, plus track 32 which is billed as "Car Noise: 6:14". Imagine the Ventures without the finesse, with spasmodic noises which suggest either that there is a bee in your CD player or that the beat-up Mark Three Corvairs down the road is about to make an appearance through your living room wall, and you will be close to envisaging the style of these recordings. The three groups are fairly interchangeable and may have been from the same nucleus of session men, though the De-Fenders add some yakety sax to the aggressive guitar sound.



OUTLINES I

MUSIC FROM MALI

Richard Scott, just back from Africa, brings news of a musical renaissance in Mali.

I'd been living in The Gambia for two or three weeks and was beginning to wonder why I was there. The inexhaustible supply of great music I'd been expecting hadn't materialised. Most of the cassette shops and stalls seemed to be full of Phil Collins and UB40, and the bright plastic Sengalese and Zairean pop that swamps the airwaves left me pretty cold (Kine Lam's *Ballad Assia Bury* and Kanda Bongo Man's *Mouss* - released here as *Zeng Zeng* (Hannibal HNCD 1366) - being honourable exceptions). Then I heard the classic *Mouss Havia Kouyaté Vol 2* from Guinea and Malian Tatine Dembele's recent *Sansa* (Camara CK7 005) and the sound sent shivers up and down my back and tears to my eyes.

I've had the confused feeling of clarity, bafflement and joy before, but not too often, first encounters with "Anarchy In The UK", Indian classical music, Ornette Coleman, Evan Parker and JS Bach, for example. I'd heard some Mandinka music in England, Gambian Kora players like Dembo Konte and the lush Parisian-produced pop of Mali's Salif Keita and Guinea's Mory Kanté, but the music of these women seems altogether deeper and more magical. The dozens of cassettes which followed demonstrated that, centering on Mali, something very rare and exciting is happening to West African music.

The first thing which strikes is the extraordinary physical power, almost violence, of these voices, which seem to come from lungs made as much of iron as of flesh. Don't believe all the "Mali's greatest singer" stuff about Salif. He's great, but there are a dozen as good and arguably better. The endless rhythmic and instrumental variety is also striking, but for me the thing which makes this a really classic period of music-making is that this music does not fit into any of the normal divisions between folk, traditional, classical, pop or whatever. Through the constant expression and replenishment of tradition, a genuinely new music is being forged.

The first category to check is the Man-

dinka griot caste singers, who are finding new styles and means either by using new instruments, new combinations of instruments, or by new arrangements of older instruments, usually in sparser or feier manners. Salif fits in here, though the electronic grandiosity of *Axex* (Mango CIDM 1073) is not particularly exciting when compared with the strapped-down manual subtlety of Kasse Mady's *Kala Tradition* (Sterns 1034) of last year, or with Ama Kouta's brilliant *Tata Sora* (Melodie 42079 1/Camara CK7 013).

The most recent classic is Sekou Kouyaté's cassette (KBC 906, produced by Syllart, distributed by Camara) which is as eloquent and diverse an expression of old meeting new as one could wish for. Ama Kouta's wholly acoustic album of *Disques Espérance* (ESP 7517, imported by Decoy Records) and the



keyboard-based *Mory Djo* (Oubten 003) are also well worth hearing. My own personal favourites are the aforementioned Tatine Dembele and Kouyaté Koly Koué (SweetSound 004), both models of restrained rhythmic intoxication and ice-cool vocal majesty and power.

Recently attention has focused on Southern Mali and the women singers of the Wassoulou region. Sterns' Syllart-produced compilation CD (STCD 1035) is an essential purchase and features some lovely music from Sali, Coumba and Kagbe Sidibe, Diemba Diakate and Oumou Sangaré (whose overrated cassette *Moussou* is supposedly the best-selling in West Africa) but is not well-produced) and also avoids the gritty rhythm and blues/funk-like intensity that endows the best of this brilliantly hypnotic dance music. Happily,

Sali Sidibe's wonderful *N'déya International* (Camara CK7 003) is to be made available here on CD next year by Shantirach Records. A clutch of other fine Sali cassettes also exists, including KBC910, distributed by Camara, and SweetSound 006. Kagbe Sidibe's *Vols 1 and 2* (Mankano) also feature joyous and driving rhythms and, to my ears, better singing.

The traditional roots of this trance-like genre can be traced on the two volume *Sory Songoré Saré Saïso Ra Demba*, if you can find them, and also on *Les Peulx du Wassoulou*, a documentary recording on Ocora (C558679). *Mouss Of The Fouta-Djallon* (Playasound PS 65028) also contains some fascinating stuff from the Peul/Fulfulde tradition. The Peul influence in Baba Madi's music may or may not be relevant to all this, even if it isn't, but *Bawjo* (Mango CIDM 1061) is still one of the most beautiful recent West African acoustic recordings and deserves a mention.

As far as Mandinka roots are concerned, you can do no better than checking out the Guineans, for example the aforementioned Hawa Kouyaté and the linn-voiced Kouyaté Sory Kanda, especially his magnificent *Vol 2*, while Jali Musa Jawara's tender *Soolobandou* (World Circuit) remains a classic.

Another major strand of interest comes from the neglected n'goni-rooted music of the djelis - storytellers, speechmakers and praise singers. Cassettes like Djeli Madou Diabre's *Vol 1 And 2* (Camara CK7 009/0010) and Ganda Fadiga's *Vol 1 And 2* (Camara CK006/0012) combine plucked string and voice in brilliantly subtle hypnotic rhythms. Of course I can't understand a word of it but

Mah Demba is also worth hearing and due to tout soon with n'goni player Manjaye Kouyaté. *Ganda Fadiga Vol 2* features the devastating raw blueslike voice of Hawa Drane, whose own cassette (Camara CK7 001) features some of the most enthralling and piercing singing I've heard. Speaking of which Mauritanian Khalifa Ould Ede and Dama Mint Abba's CD (World Circuit WCD 19) suggests that developments every bit as exciting as Mali's new music could be about to be unleashed from the other side of the Sahara. I'm not sure how much more excitement I can take...

(Unfortunately a lot of the cassettes listed are not

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OUTLINES 2

DINU LIPATTI

Max Harrison remembers the life and work of a classical piano giant.

AS THEY accelerate away from us into history, we too readily forget that past heroes were human, yet we still value remaining personal links. No wonder, as he noted in *Wire* 86, that Jack Cooke occupies a special position with later Coltrane adherents because he was around earlier, and actually met the inimitable saxophonist. I know the feeling, a comparable role being thrust on me by young and middle-aged classical pianists and connoisseurs through having heard Dinu Lipatti on three of his four visits to Britain. Born in 1917, his international appearances began in the 1930s and soon there were hints that he might not be here long, Poulenc, for instance, commenting on the "divine spirituality" of his playing even then. The career was interrupted by World War II, spent in his native Romania and in Switzerland, after which he emerged just briefly, to be recognised as one of our century's greatest pianists.

True, Lipatti had almost every advantage. His parents were rich and highly musical, the father having studied the violin with Fleish and Ysaye, the mother being perhaps the best pianist in Romania, the godfather being George Enescu, the one international musical figure that country had produced hitherto. Lipatti even had the ideal physique for a pianist – the abnormally long fingers, the wrestler's shoulders – ... His gifts declared themselves at the earliest possible moment and he apparently was playing quite fluently when four. Later his teachers included Cortot for the piano, Nadia Boulan-

ger for composition.

Yet Lipatti's health was delicate and his last years were shadowed by leukaemia. It seemed that corsons, then a new drug, could arrest, though not reverse, the effects of this disease, and he was restored to high spirits and seeming good health. His magnificent London recordings were supplemented by others, done in Geneva, that were still more remarkable. Corsons's benefits, however, did not last, and it is no melodramatic exaggeration to assert that some of his most inspired readings were snatched in the actual shadow of death. The end came on December 2nd 1950, but who can say that Lipatti's having such a tenuous hold on life did not feed the poetic fire which still blazes through all his recorded performances?



That his reputation survives undimmed owes something to his recordings having remained in the catalogue, on everything from 78s to CDs – and the most recent issue, *Dinu Lipatti* EMI CZS767163-2 (five CDs), is the most comprehensive thus far. But the mere availability of records does not compel anyone to hear them. Lipatti's continuing impact has depended on his work conveying a revelatory understanding of the minds of some of the greatest composers, most notably Mozart, Bach, Chopin. This is projected with startling simplicity and directness, everything taking on an almost magical air because of its utter rightness.

The necessary foundation of Lipatti's activities was a technique phenomenal even by today's standards. Hear, for example, the explosive virtuosity of his Ravel "Alborada

del gracioso", a performance which still astonishes young pianists. But although the playing is completely personal, there is, paradoxically, no suggestion of the interpreter getting between composer and listener. This implies considerable humility – he said, "music is to be served, not used" – and this, combined with his extraordinary artistic powers and bad health, led some of his more soft-headed admirers to pretend that he was a saint? Yet unlike a certain later saxophonist, Lipatti treated this notion with exemplary derision.

His rejection of such nonsense arose partly from natural fastidiousness but more particularly from unrelenting self-criticism. Though his musical and pianistic equipment was such that he could absorb pieces quickly, he worked on music for years before playing it in public: never was a virtuoso less tempered by his virtuosity. Among his recordings only "Alborada del gracioso" satisfied him, and it was only after prolonged misgivings that he allowed the issue of his acutely expressive Chopin *Banarile*.

Inexhaustible subtleties of phrasing, colour and rhythmic inflection were the vehicles of a wide range of emotions, from the elegant grace of Lipatti's Scarlatti sonatas to the passionate outbursts of Liszt's "Sonetto del Petrarca 104" via the clarity of contrapuntal textures in Bach's Partita No 1. Here each line appears to have an energy and motivation of its own, thus indicating an absolutely exceptional independence of the fingers. Schnabel said the finest music is better than it can be played, yet surely in Mozart's Sonata K 310 and Concerto K 467 the composer's lofty inspiration is matched by that of the pianist. Other major works here include Schumann's Concerto, which has restored to it the verbal freshness it must have possessed in the early days of Romanticism, Chopin's Concerto No 1 and Sonata No 3, Enescu's Sonata No 3 and smaller pieces by Schubert, Beethoven, and again Bach and Chopin.

Such performances are as relevant now as ever, although the face which looks out at us from surviving photographs seems to have grown more disconcertingly youthful as the decades have passed. The real point, however, the basis of Lipatti's continuing presence, is that his interpretations, rising out of the very depths of the music he played, are timeless.

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tin machine continued from page 46

the blueprint for a lot of things for a lot of people. David worked with him a lot because he was the musical director: he had a really good overview. David needed someone to run things and Carlos fitted the bill. Seeing him on the Glass Spider tour (1987), I thought that he was not appropriate to some of the later stuff – but then, on a track like ‘Never Let Me Down’, his guitar playing is great.”

Ricky Gardiner

Played on *Low* (1977)

Reeves: “He was somebody who never got his due – David said he never really found out what he could do because he never got the room to stretch in David’s band the way other guitarists did. I thought his playing on *Low* was really cool. I remember seeing him live with David on *Saturday Night Live*, and I know he played with Hunt and Tony on the Iggy stuff (*The Idiot* and *Last For Life*) – I’d like to speak to him one day because he seems to come from a similar place to me somehow. There’s something in there that I respond to: I liked that stringy sound of a Strat played through a Marshall. He’s got a farm somewhere in Wales now.”

Robert Fripp

Lead guitar on “Heresy” (1977), *Scary Monsters (And Super Creeps)* (1980).

Reeves: “Fripp made it possible not to have long hair, and wear suits, and still play monstrous guitar. He was one of the first rock guitarists who went outside the blues, and who was able to reconcile being an intellectual with playing big dumb rock – he was a very smart guy. His tone and sustain – his mother could recognise him on the radio, I think. His playing on the *Scary Monsters* album was his best. Most of the King Crimson stuff had a premeditated quality to it, apart from maybe the live album he did with Bruford and Wetton, but with David’s albums apparently he just walked in and did it. The spontaneity of being forced into a situation primarily for primitives yielded something better.”

Adrian Belew

Lead guitar on *Stages* (1978), *Lodger* (1979).

Bowie: “Adrian had a really bizarre approach to the guitar but didn’t have much awareness of blues guitarists or how the guitar had evolved. He’d taken most of his thing from Fripp and gone on from there.”

Reeves: “I saw him on the first Talking Heads big band tour: they did a couple of songs without him and then he came out for ‘Psycho Killer’ and took the top of my head off. Not having seen Jimi Hendrix play, I had never seen anyone do that – holding their guitar at the amplifier and changing the physical angle. Instead of just harmony and melody, there was this third dimension of sonic stuff. I remember going home and looking at my Strat in the corner and thinking, what the fuck is he thinking? What planet is he on?”

Nile Rodgers

Played rhythm guitar on *Let’s Dance* (1983), which he co-produced with Bowie.

Reeves: “Nile has that New York clean-Strat-direct-through-the-board thing that he does – that’s Nile, and I certainly copped it. Someone’d want a funk guitar, I’d put on my Strat: ‘Oh, let’s just go direct with a compressor . . .’ It’s funny though, people like Nile and Carlos Alomar, when they try to sketch into a solo they don’t speak to me. But their funk thing, you can hear they’ve grown up in it.”

Stevie Ray Vaughan

Played lead on *Let’s Dance* (1983).

Bowie: “I wanted to see if you could combine the elements of late 70s dance music with pure, ripping blues guitar, because I’d never heard it and I thought it could be an exciting combination. He was terribly excited, because he saw it as a great opening for him to present what he was doing to another audience – up to that time he was more or less a cult. And he was enthusiastic because I’d explained to him that I didn’t want him to be farring around and trying to be clever: I wanted him exactly the way he played, against dance music. So he didn’t have to compromise at all and in fact he did reach a huge audience. It was of course incredibly tragic that his life was cut so short.”

Reeves: “I was on the road with funk and R&B bands at the time, and it was brilliant because suddenly I thought hey, I can play blues licks over a dance groove. It certainly gave me a new lease of life in the early 80s when the guitar seemed to be dying.”

Peter Dinklage

Lead guitar on *Never Let Me Down* (1987)

Reeves: “There’s a lot of guitar in *Never Let Me Down*, but no one ever talks about it. Frampton played some great stuff, but there wasn’t the interlock between the guitars and the sound. There wasn’t a clear vision.”

Reeves Gabrels

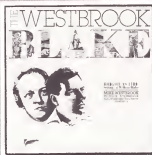
Lead guitarist in Tin Machine. First learned guitar from Turk van Lake, a family friend who played with Benny Goodman. Went to design college in New York in ’74, intending to be a comics artist. Started playing in fusion groups, took lessons from John Scofield. At college, studied pop songwriting under Brill Building writer Lou Sealman, which led to playing on studio sessions. Went on to Berkeley College of Music, Boston – “at that time it was known as a jazz school, now it’s more pop/metal” – and became part of the college studio band, intending to become studio session player “like Larry Carlton”. After seeing Adrian Belew with Talking Heads, joined a black funk band, “playing five sets a night, six days a week when it was hip for funk bands to have a white rock guitarist”. Played with various Boston bands until a cassette of one of them sent David Bowie to the telephone . . .

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Joseph Haydn continued from page 28

One of the big success stories among recent classical releases has been the enormous popularity of the Kodály Quartet's Haydn recordings (Naxos) – superb versions of the later quartets, all at bargain prices. The good news is that the Kodály have now been commissioned to record the complete cycle; the bad is that, as they hadn't planned for this in their schedules, it could be 12 months or so before their next batch of releases is ready. However, their discs of *op. 51 'The Last Seven Words'* 7103, 54, 55, 71, 74 and 76 (the latter on two CDs) are in the shops now and highly recommended.

Other top-quality – but unfortunately full-price – sets include the Lindsay Quartet's *op. 54* (ASV) and the Takács Quartet's *op. 76* and *op. 77/103* (Decca). Less impressive is the Amadeus Quartet's three-CD, mid-price set of *op. 51/64*, a lacklustre performance that is particularly disappointing as – the elusive *Tátra* aside – this is the only available complete version of the delightful *op. 69*.

There are not, as yet, many recordings of the string quartets on period instruments. The better ones include the Salomon Quartet's reading of *op. 71* and *74* (spread, expensively, across three discs) and *op. 77/103* (all Hyperion), but the outstanding contributions here are the two discs by the Quatuor Mosarques (Astrée) – a brilliant account of *op. 20*, 2–4 and a hardly less dynamic set of *op. 77/103* (the latter called here 77.3).

Back on modern instruments, there are several compilation discs which feature two or three of the more popular quartets from various sets. Good mid-price buys include the Janáček Quartet (Decca), playing *op. 3.5/op. 33.2/op. 76.2*; and the Italian Quartet (Philips) with a similar programme, except that *op. 69.5* replaces *op. 33.2*. (We now know that *op. 3* isn't by Haydn at all, but it's still an engaging piece!) Finally, take a listen to one of the Lindsay Quartet's *Live At Wigmore Hall* compilations (ASV), these have tremendous pizzazz, even if the group can't resist playing up to the audience at times, notably in the almost thrash-tempo prestos! Best buy is volume two, which has *op. 64.5/op. 76.3* and, the real clincher, the single quartet of *op. 42*, which is hard to find elsewhere.

String quartets; essential listening

Kodály Quartet (Naxos): *Op. 76. 1–3* (8.550314), *Op. 76. 4–6* (8.550315)

Quatuor Mosarques (Astrée): *Oeuvre 32 (2)* (ie *Op. 20. 2–4*) (E.8786)

i) Piano Works



HAYDN'S PIANO trios are a third great body of works to set beside the symphonies and string quartets. He wrote 45 in all (two are lost), most relatively late in his career so they nearly all possess that magical combination of light touch and depth of expression which typifies his mature music: the last eight in particular, *No. 38–45* (Hob XV 24–31), are among his greatest chamber

masterworks. The only complete set of the trios is the superlative recording by the Beaux Arts Trio, on modern instruments, which was recently reissued as a mid-price, nine-CD box-set (Philips), there is also a single, mid-price disc of *No. 38–40/43* (Hob XV 24–27) from this set. On period instruments, the Cohen/Hobart/Coen trio (Harmonia Mundi) have released two discs of earlier trios, but the best buy at present is probably the London Fortepiano Trio's vigorous treatments of *No. 38–62* (Hob XV, 24–26), this is the set which Haydn dedicated to Rebecca Schroetter and which includes his famous "Gypsy Rondo" (Hyperion).

The piano sonatas date from various periods in Haydn's career and are of rather more erratic quality: several are little more than pretty drawing-room pieces, written specifically for the very non-virtuoso player. But *No. 33* (Hob XVI 20) is a not-so-minor-miracle from the *Sturm und Drang* period, and with the last five sonatas, *No. 38–62* (Hob XVI 48–52) we are again in the rarified world of Haydn's mature genius. These pieces, plus slightly different selections of the best of the rest, are available on two excellent four-CD series: one, by Alfred Brendel (Philips), offers ruminative, polished interpretations on modern piano, the other, by Paul Badura-Skoda (Astrée), charms with the brittle elegance of its 1790 pianoforte sonorities. Both sets also include the "Andante con variazioni in F minor" and the "Fantasia in C" but, while Brendel adds the "Adagio in F", Badura-Skoda tempts with a more generous bonus of the "Arietta in E flat" and the "Variations on the 'Emperor Hymn'", the famous Austrian anthem which Haydn also used in his string quartet, *op. 76.3*.

The mid-price, two-CD set of *The Last Six Sonatas* by Glenn Gould (CBS Masterworks) is more likely to appeal to fans of Glenn Gould than to fans of Haydn.

Piano works; essential listening

Beaux Arts Trio (Philips): *Piano Trios No. 24–27* (422 851–2)
Paul Badura Skoda (Astrée): *Sonates & Pièces Pour Le Piano-Forte IV* (E7714)

d) Concertos & Miscellaneous Instrumental Music



HAYDN DID NOT excel at concertos. He was not a virtuoso instrumentalist himself and it seems he was disinclined to explore the concerto form. He did write a handful in his early days at Esterházy, but only three after 1780, the *Keyboard Concerto No. 11 in D*, the *Cello*

Concerto No. 2 in D (both from 1780–3) and the *Trumpet Concerto in E flat*, from 1796, his finest essay in the form. Of the earlier pieces, the three violin concertos, two horn concertos and the *Cello Concerto in C* (rediscovered only in 1962) all have an easy-flowing charm that explains their continuing popularity. Recommended discs are Trevor Pinnock/The English Concert CD of the three violin concertos (Archiv: soloist Simon Standage) and an unbeatable Philips Laser Line Classics mid-price compilation of the *Trumpet Concerto* (soloist

Hakan Hardenberger), two horn concertos (soloist Hermann Baumann) and the earlier, more successful, of the two cello concertos – No 1 in C (soloist Heinrich Schiff). electrifying stuff! There is also an impressive period-instrument disc of the two cello concertos by Christopher Hogwood/AAM (L'Oiseau Lyre, soloist Christophe Coin), and a good bargain-price set of the *Keyboard Concerto No 11* (played here on harpsichord), the early double concerto for violin and harpsichord and *Symphony No 31* by the Liszt Ferenc CO (Hungaroton White Label)

White Label also offers two bargain-price discs of Haydn's more lightweight instrumental music: a set of six sonatas for violin and viola, in which the composer's invention with such limited resources is wonderful to hear, and a pleasing set of five divertimenti for wind instruments. Other occasional music worth a listen includes the trios for baryton (an instrument which sounds like a sitar on downers) – you can buy eight spread over two full-price CDs by Hsu/Miller/Arcio (Gaudemius) or seven on a single mid-price disc from the Esterházy Trio (EMI), and the divertimenti for flute, violin and cello (Hob IV, No's 6–11) given deft, expert performances by the trio of Nicolet/Kantorow/Fujiward (Denon).

Concertos etc: essential listening

Trevor Pinnock/The English Concert/Simon Standage (Archiv): 3 *Violin Concertos* (427 316–2)

Hardenberger/Baumann/Schiff (Philips Laser Line). *Coverto* (432 060–2)

e) Vocal Works



BETWEEN 1775 and 1790 Haydn's time was devoted largely to opera. As *Kapellmeister* he staged nearly 90 new productions at Esterházy in that period and wrote seven operas himself, to add to the ten or so he had composed previously. Given the central role which opera played in his life, it's incredible that only one of his own is currently available on CD – this is *L'Infidelità delusa*, performed by Sigiswald Kuijken/La Petite Bande (Deutsch Harmonia Mundi), a sparkling *opera buffa* here given a warm, vivacious performance that's highly recommended.

While Haydn never mastered opera as he did the symphony and string quartet, there are many beautiful moments scattered throughout his scores, as was proven by the now-deleted series of operas which Antal Dorati recorded for Philips. I hope that at least some of these will soon be reissued on CD: how about *Lo Spedale, Il mondo della luna, La fedeltà premiata* and *Armida* for starters? In the meantime, there are two intriguing collections of arias available: a mid-price disc by Jessye Norman (Philips) features arias and the occasional duet from *Armida* and *La vera costanza*, while a recent set of arias and cantatas by Arleen Auger (L'Oiseau Lyre) has arias which Haydn wrote for inclusion in other people's operas (a common 18th century practice) plus two of his best-known cantatas,

"Scena di Berence" and "Arianna a Naxos" (the latter given here in a rare arrangement for string orchestra).

Haydn also set a large number of songs, including collections of Scottish and Welsh folk songs and a number of English love songs which date from his visits to London: some of the latter, plus the better-known piano arrangement of "Arianna a Naxos", make up an unusual recital disc, *She Never Told Her Love*, by Judith Nelson/Elaire Thornburgh (Koch International Classics)

If Haydn's operas are neglected, versions of his two late oratorios, *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, continue to gush forth in a seemingly unstoppable flood. There's no space here to do more than list a few recommendations. So, for *The Creation*, try Christopher Hogwood/AAM (L'Oiseau Lyre) for a moving period-instrument version, and Karl Münchinger/VPO for a mid-price modern performance (Decca Ovation). For *The Seasons*, best buy is a close call between a glowing Karl Böhm/VPO account (Galleria) and the feisty, more earthy approach of Antal Dorati/RPO (Decca Ovation). Both are on modern instruments, both are mid-price, and both are two-CD sets (as are *The Creation* discs)

Haydn wrote a good deal of fine church music throughout his career, but definitely the finest is the final series of six masses which he composed between 1796 and 1802. Trevor Pinnock/The English Concert (Archiv) offer a thrilling, period reading of 1798's "Nelson Mass", c/w the brief *Te Deum* from 1798–1800. Otherwise, probably the best buys of the remaining five masses, plus some earlier ones, come on the mid-price series of modern recordings by George Guest/The Choir Of St John's College Cambridge (Decca Ovation), most of which come coupled with a comparable church piece by Mozart. My own favourites are the *Theresianmesse*, the *Schubfängermesse* and, especially, the *Harmoniemesse*, Haydn's last major work and an amazing blend of energy, mellowness and the willingness still – at 70 – to experiment, here with the wind instruments that give the work its name (the German "harmony" refers to a wind-band). "I have only just learned in my old age how to use the wind instruments," Haydn lamented, "and now that I do understand them I must leave the world."

Even so, he left the world an incomparably richer place.

Vocal works: essential listening

Sigiswald Kuijken/La Petite Bande (Deutsch Harmonia Mundi) *L'Infidelità delusa* (RD 77099)

Christopher Hogwood/Academy Of Ancient Music (L'Oiseau Lyre) *The Creation* (430 397–2)

George Guest/Choir Of St John's College Cambridge (Decca Ovation) *Harmoniemesse* (430 162–2)

Finally, some recommended reading:

Haydn by Rosemary Hughes (Dent Master Musicians, £5.95), *The Classical Style* by Charles Rosen (Faber & Faber, £9.99), *Haydn, His Life And Music* by H C Robbins Landon and David Wyn Jones (Thames & Hudson, £24).

HEY MAN, THAT'S REALLY WAY UP

WITH REFERENCE TO issue 91, September 1991. I wonder how many of your more perceptive readers noticed that not only was this issue printed upside down (with the exception of the photograph of Frank Zappa), but also back to front?

I am presently up to page 58. Or should that be 83?

What, me crazy? No way.

HAROLD BARBOUR, Bury

We did this in a shameless attempt to win more Australian readers. And look what's coming next. — Ed

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ANDREW HUNTER, Fremantle, Australia

The rest of this letter seems to be word and inconspicuous — Ed.



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WE'RE ONLY IN IT FOR THE WEASELS

THANKS FOR the articles on Zappa. Although I'd disagree with some of the criticism, it's good to see a favourable overview of his work. However, the omissions . . .

might be pedantic to suggest *Mothermania* (1969) as it was a compilation album — but it's the only one that Frank authorised. I think you should have included the *Old Masters Box 1, 2 and 3*. Although they are the original albums repackaged, Boxes 1 and 2 included a Mystery Disc which did more than "skim the surface of Zappa's juvenilia" and also included early Mothers recordings.

The omission of *Does Honour Belong In Music?* is more serious, particularly as it is one of my favourite Zappa albums! To make up for this, perhaps you'll print my suggested listening for those who don't know Frank's music.

Every *The Wire* reader should own *Hot Rats*, *Make A Jazz Noise Here* and *Wah! Wah! Wah!*. Those readers with avant-garde tendencies should then go via *Wasted Ripped My Fleeb*, *Uncle Meat* and *FZ Meets The Mothers Of Prevention*. Those readers who are more song-oriented should perhaps approach Zappa via *Stage Vol 4*, *Thou Or Us* and *Does Honour Belong In Music* (the CD, not the video).

After that, pick at random. You won't go far wrong.

STEPHEN BECKETT, Birmingham

Thanks Stephen — for your diligence, take a shot of Jim Beam — Ed.

win!

Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* Symphonies

Thanks to our friends at DG/Archiv, we have five sets of Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* symphonies — as performed on period instruments by Trevor Pinnock and The English Concert — to give away in this month's competition. That's 19 symphonies in a special-issue, six-CD box-set — including such famous Haydn works as **No 43 'Mercury'**, **No 48 'Maria Theresa'** and **No 49 'La Passione'**.

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You see, our founder said what went in his bottle was more important than what went on it.

And we still say that at the Tennessee distillery today.

If your interest lies in a truly smooth sippin' whiskey, we recommend Jack Daniel's. But if you like colourful labels, well there's no shortage of brands to pick from.

SMOOTH SIPPIN' TENNESSEE WHISKEY





Black Bush
Irish Whiskey

